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Jo Nesbo


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Jo Nesbo: whiskey sour (2 1/2 ounces Bulleit bourbon, 1/2 ounce simple syrup, 1/2 ounce lemon...











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THE COMPLETE PEANUTS TPB 13

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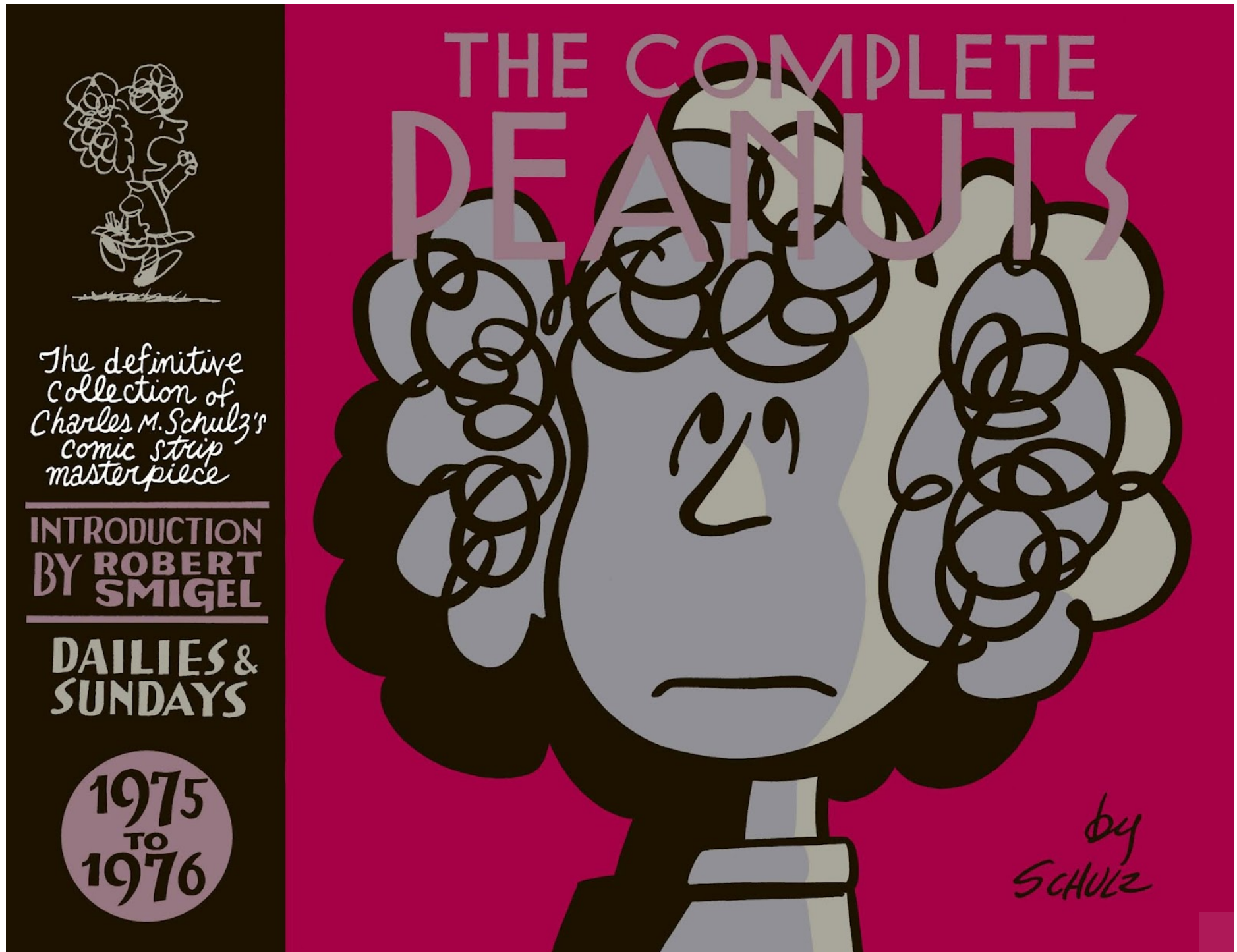
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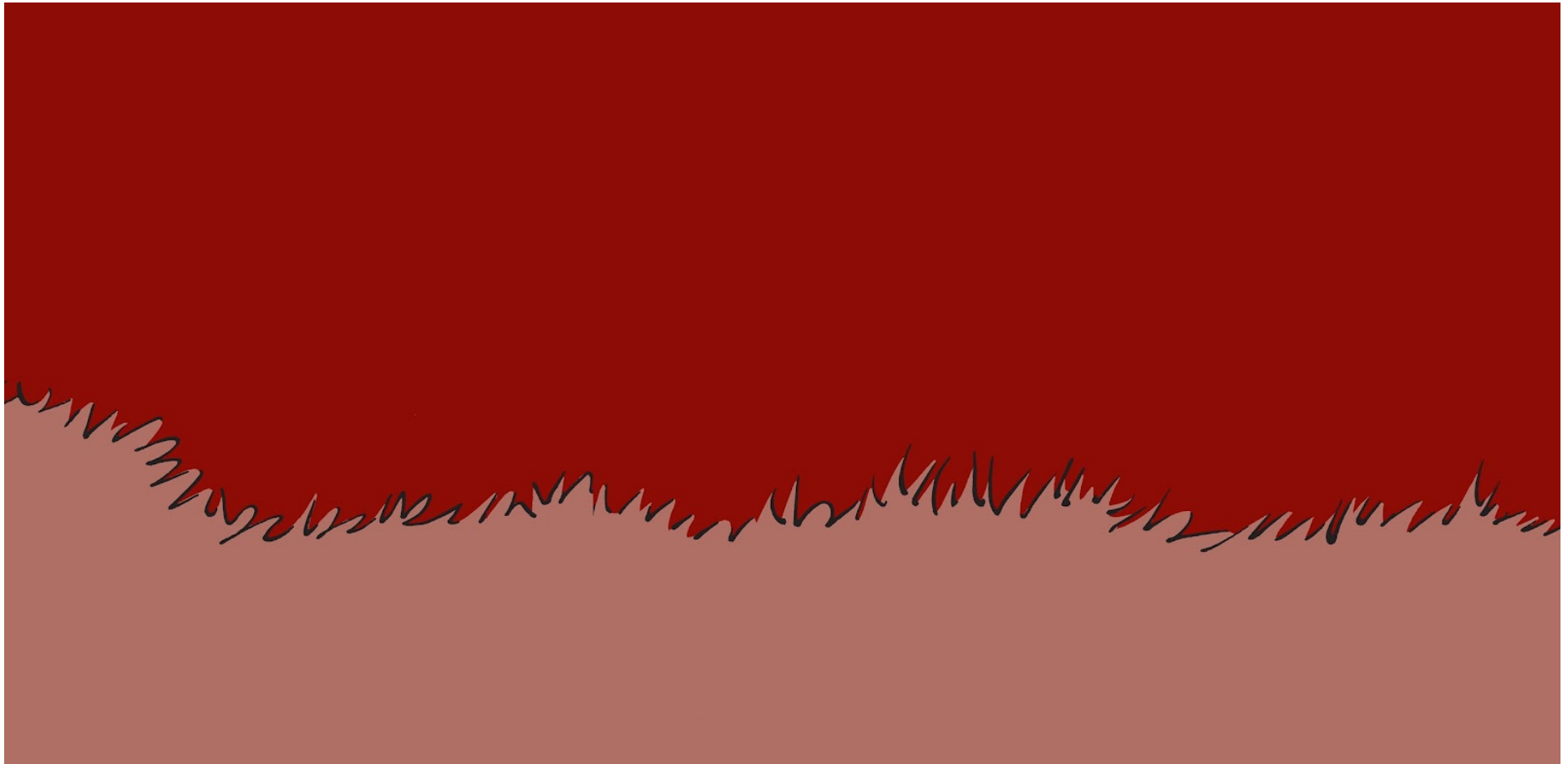
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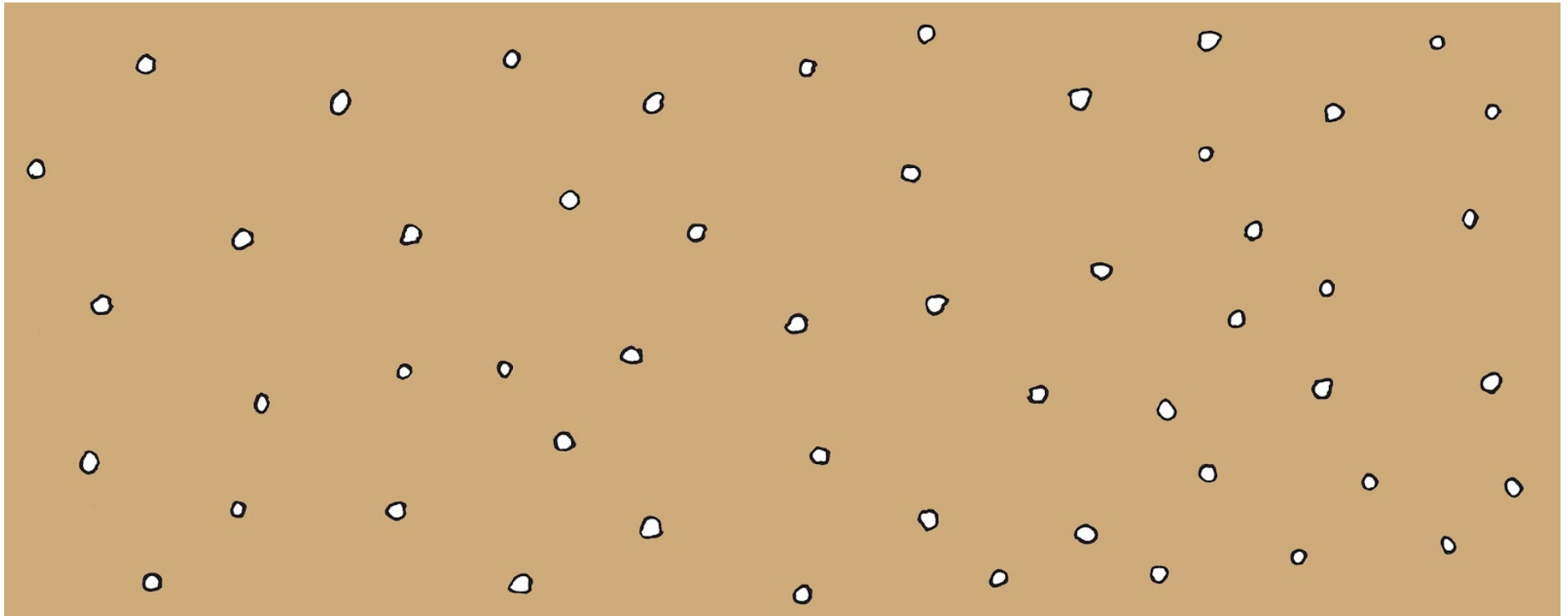


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THE COMPLETE PEANUTS

by Charles M. Schulz

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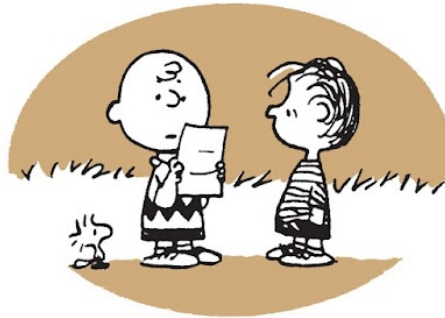
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CHARLES M. SCHULZ

THE COMPLETE PEANUTS

1975 TO 1976



"DEAR ROUND-
HEADED KID..."

▣ FANTAGRAPHICS BOOKS ▣



Charles M. Schulz at his drawing board at 1 Snoopy Place, circa 1975. Courtesy of the Schulz Family.







FOREWORD by ROBERT SMIGEL

This volume of *The Complete Peanuts* marks the beginning of the second 25 years of Charles Schulz's magnificent strip. For some readers, it also offers the question: Have they already run out of good people to write the forewords? The dog puppet-guy, really? We're not even into the '80s yet.

I'd like to reassure those discriminating readers that it's really my qualifications as a *Peanuts* fan and, uh, nerd, that merit my place alongside the Cronkites, Keillors, and Whoopis of past forewords. I'm someone who already possessed nearly all of the *Peanuts* strips published by Fantagraphics Books so far, not only in the Holt Rinehart Winston collections from the '60s and '70s, but also the Fawcett

Crest books that had the same material, simply reprinted into smaller books that I felt the need to own as well. I'm someone who populated my room with *Peanuts* felt pennants, calendars, dolls, mugs, and any *Peanuts*-related book, even cookbooks. Some family friends built me a chair with a seatback that was Linus in the front and Charlie Brown in back (fittingly, CB had to settle for Linus's head shape). For Halloween they made me a mushy papier-maché Linus mask that scared people for all the wrong reasons. When I needed glasses I was inordinately excited because Linus once needed them, and while other kids thought my choice of round wire rims was cool, because they resembled

John Lennon's, I was only trying to look like Linus. I had a Snoopy watch and a Linus pillow that I briefly tried to use as a security blanket before my dad drew the line. I dreamed of being a cartoonist and, by age 9, I could draw all the *Peanuts* characters, but I *never* drew them naked or having sex—out of respect. My friends had to settle for drawings of lesser lights, like Dennis the Menace and the Flintstones, engaging in that kind of behavior. What I mean to say, to those readers who've collected all of *The Complete Peanuts* books, is, I am you. Or worse.

It was a dark and sunny night in the summer of 1967 when I went to bed with a 40¢ copy of *Here Comes Snoopy* that my father, who has always known how to make me laugh, bought me that afternoon. I still remember intending to read a little bit before going to sleep, and then being up at two in the morning, completely hooked, staying up later and laughing harder than I ever had in my life.

So vivid is my memory of that night that I can pinpoint the specific strip (June 28, 1956) that pushed me over the edge, or turned a light on inside me, to choose a more cheerful metaphor. It was Linus firing an arrow, intended for Snoopy to fetch, which a resting Snoopy catches in his mouth inches past the

bow, cutting short all the intended fun with crisp efficiency. I guess I'd never seen anything so silly, but also sad, at the same time.

At that age I didn't really appreciate the melancholy that lay behind even the broadest physical jokes, and the meanings of words like "anxiety" (or the pronunciation of "psychiatric") weren't all that clear. But the message of *Peanuts* was already working on me. I'd been bombarded with entertainment, especially cartoons, where good guys and bad guys

are broadly defined, where lessons are always learned, and where everything turns out right in the end. *Peanuts* was the first comic strip to acknowledge that life can be difficult, and disappointing, and even lousy. It's hard to express what a gift that message was to children. By articulating thoughts I had but couldn't articulate, by revealing childhood as a script-

ed ritual filled with roles we're not all fit to play, and by making me laugh at the powerful and unique joke of kids not getting what they want, Schulz helped take the pressure off my childhood. Contrary to what I'd gleaned from the kids in Disney movies and sitcoms, I now knew that my childhood stresses were not uncommon, and I was able to roll with them. It sounds goofy, but if you're among those



who've chosen to collect all of these volumes yourself, you probably know what I mean.

You also probably consider *Peanuts* a classic work that deserves to last generations. I feel like it will, though its impact on today's young readers has certainly been diluted by imitators. Nowadays it's hard to escape TV shows that don't feature ensembles of bickering kids, although none have the nerve to avoid happy resolutions, and the worst remain heavy-handed morality plays straining to nip any children anxieties in the bud.

"Don't let anyone tell you you're not good enough," a bear will implore to some kids. You can almost hear the bear finishing the writer's first draft: "...like my father told me. I showed him."

We can take solace in knowing Schulz's influence stretched far beyond children's entertainment. Schulz was at the forefront of a seismic (is there something bigger than seismic? Put that in) shift in entertainment, from escapism and larger-than-life characters to a reflection of ourselves. You can draw a line from *Peanuts* to the explosion of observational humor, to movies with average-looking leading men in the '70s, all the way to reality shows that take our comfort in other people's misery to pathological extremes. Wait, this was supposed to be about taking solace.



The truth is the comedy of *Peanuts* has so many shades that it's influenced nearly everyone. People like to focus on the emotional and intellectual aspects, but the absurd and abstract elements were just as groundbreaking. Certainly Snoopy's fantasy life is the jumping off point for much of the silliness, and I've learned firsthand how much funnier insult jokes are with the layer of absurdity provided by a dog puppet. But, of course, it's not limited to Snoopy. Think back to Lucy presenting Charlie Brown with

a slide-show of his faults, then flash forward to Albert Brooks facing his past in *Defending Your Life*. In this volume, check out Woodstock's bitter rejection of burnt toast (March 2, 1975), then think of *Seinfeld* and the homeless woman's rejection of muffin-bottoms. Now do five jumping jacks and egg your neighbor's house. Sorry, we foreword writers get

carried away with our power sometimes.

In comparing this volume to the last couple, it seems the '75-'76 years took an even sharper turn toward the absurd. It's almost startling how much lighter and sillier these cartoons are compared to those from just a few years earlier, which featured more brilliant, deeper discussions and monologues than ever. Maybe the change had to do with Schulz

settling into a happier marriage, or simply a desire to take some chances rather than repeat himself. He highlights a bunch of new characters, including Snoopy's siblings Spike and Belle, Truffles, the object of a love triangle in which Snoopy, of course, prevails, several "bullies" (who, as always in *Peanuts*, talk like the bullies from the '30s who probably tormented young Sparky), and most notably, numerous inanimate objects whose thoughts we've never been privy to: the pitcher's mound, the garage, Snoopy's various body parts, and most notably, the school, a frustrated old building whose non-humanness allows Schulz to make the most lascivious joke I've ever read in *Peanuts* (February 3, 1975) and to kill off a character (by suicide, of all things) without anyone feeling too badly.

Lucy's baiting of Schroeder is also sillier than ever, as she compares Beethoven unfavorably to Elton John and country music, and Peppermint Patty's endearing gullibility is taken to ridiculous extremes. She no longer believes Snoopy is human but is able to go through Obedience School without ever catching on that she's the only human student—a premise that *The Simpsons* writers might have considered too improbable even for Homer. In these pages she's also the first Great Pumpkin cult recruit that never doubts Linus for a moment. And in an



acid trip of overlapping fantasies she rents Snoopy's doghouse to fly in the Powerpuff Derby only to become enraged—not in realizing it's a doghouse, but when Snoopy reclaims it to fight the Red Baron.

Considering all this insanity reminds me of the shock I felt when I first saw what Schulz looked like. I had bought one of those compilation books with material I already had twice—I think it was *Peanuts Treasury*—and on the back was a picture of my hero...wearing thick-rimmed glasses and a buzz cut! How could the coolest guy in the '60s (remember, I placed him ahead of John Lennon) have a buzz cut?! Since then I've learned that all my comedy heroes fit a similar mold. It's always the "rebels in sweaters" who've had more impact than the overtly dark, angry poseurs who wear rebellion on their sleeves. In my lifetime, people like Letterman, Steve Martin,

the Monty Python troupe, and Larry David & Seinfeld have affected comedy the most by subverting it from within.

And Schulz led the way. Without his core values, his underlying ideal of honesty, decency, and humility, the darkness would never have worked. But it worked so well that many people misunderstood it. When Schulz passed away, I was frustrated by the simplistic eulogies crediting Charlie Brown

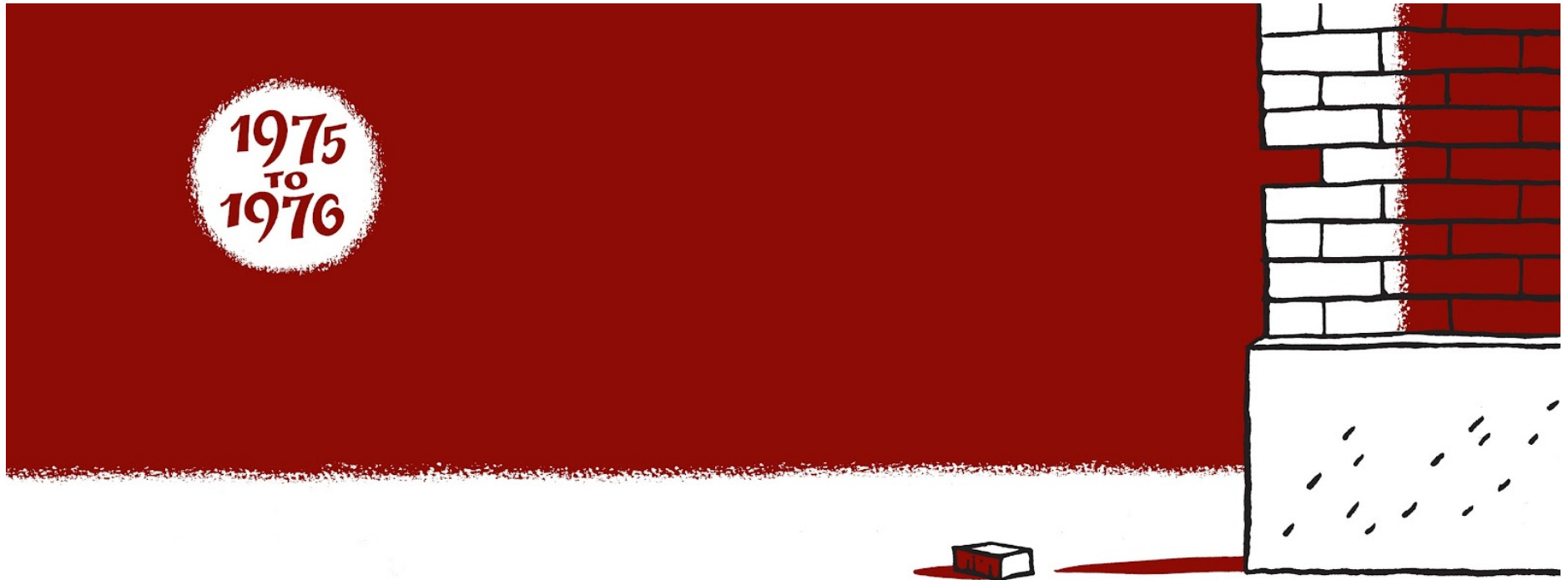
with exemplifying “the American spirit” of “picking yourself up and trying again.” Had I read the same comic? Charlie Brown didn’t keep trying to kick Lucy’s football out of some inner strength and Horatio Alger resolve we were supposed to admire. He did it because he was weak. He was flawed, and he couldn’t help himself. But that’s exactly why we love him. Like all of us, Charlie Brown just needed to feel hope. Hope is what sustains us through our troubles, even when we’re afraid to act on our dreams. And Charlie Brown is a compulsive hopeaholic. His weakness was always presented not with anger and scorn, but with understanding and forgiveness, by a man of faith.

On the matter of Schulz breaking ground, I’m compelled to mention *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, and a specific cartoon I wrote for *Saturday Night Live*. It featured a disgruntled Jesus coming back and zapping hypocritical televangelists, then sadly watching the holiday be trivialized on television before landing on *A Charlie Brown Christmas* at the moment Linus recites from scripture. A close-up of Jesus’ eyes tearing up was meant to be poignant, but, I’ll admit, also meant to get a laugh from the audience. It was met with a still silence. The audience cherished Linus’s moment, and there was simply no instinct to laugh,



no matter the context. That cartoon was among the most popular I’ve ever made for the show, primarily, I believe, because of the audience’s shared affection for the real thing. I don’t know if *A Charlie Brown Christmas* was Schulz’s favorite *Peanuts* special—it did, after all, have a happier resolution than his strips—but he had to be proud of presenting that message, in that manner. In today’s world, watching that scene with Linus is probably the most religious experience many people have during the holidays.

On the first *SNL* after Schulz’s passing I wanted to replace my cartoon’s final credit with a tribute. For music, I chose “Christmastime Is Here,” for me, the ultimate *Peanuts* tune, the saddest happy song I’ve ever heard. And I pulled out my old *Here Comes Snoopy* book, hoping to find an image that would somehow be appropriate. Incredibly, in that book was a drawing of Linus (August 8, 1957), having just had his blanket pulled away by Snoopy, eyes bugged, hair boinged, but still frozen in the thumb-sucking, blanket-holding position. It’s exactly how I felt that week, and still feel sometimes when things are rough. I sure miss knowing Charlie Brown’s out there, getting through his own mess. Thankfully for us there are twelve more of these books coming out.







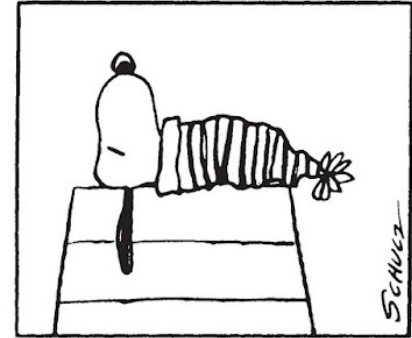
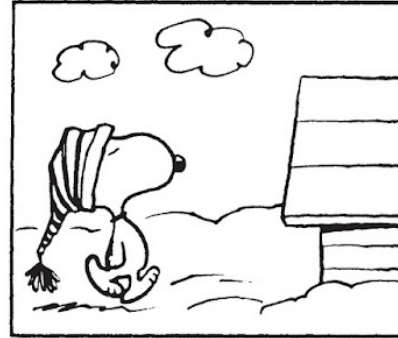
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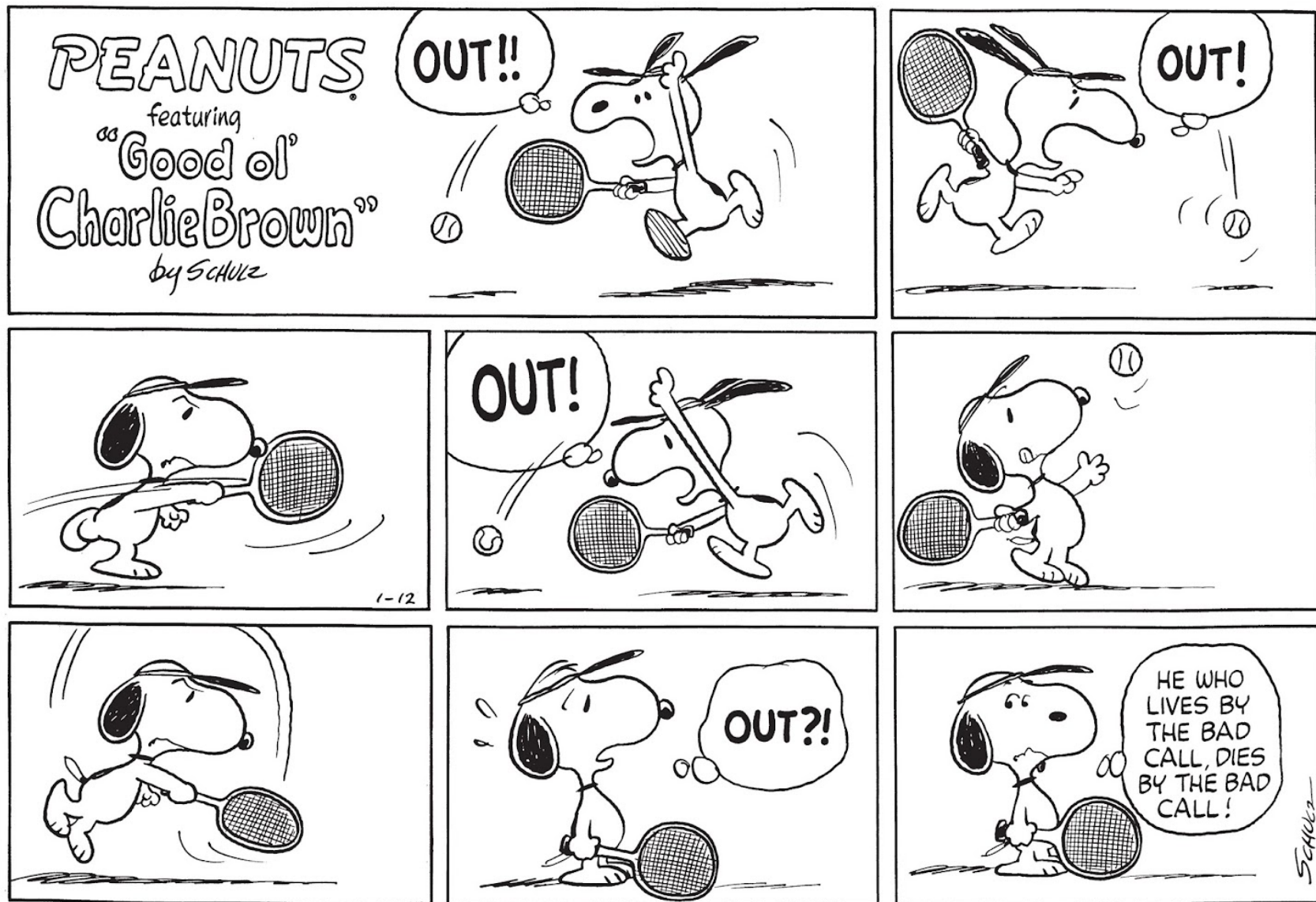


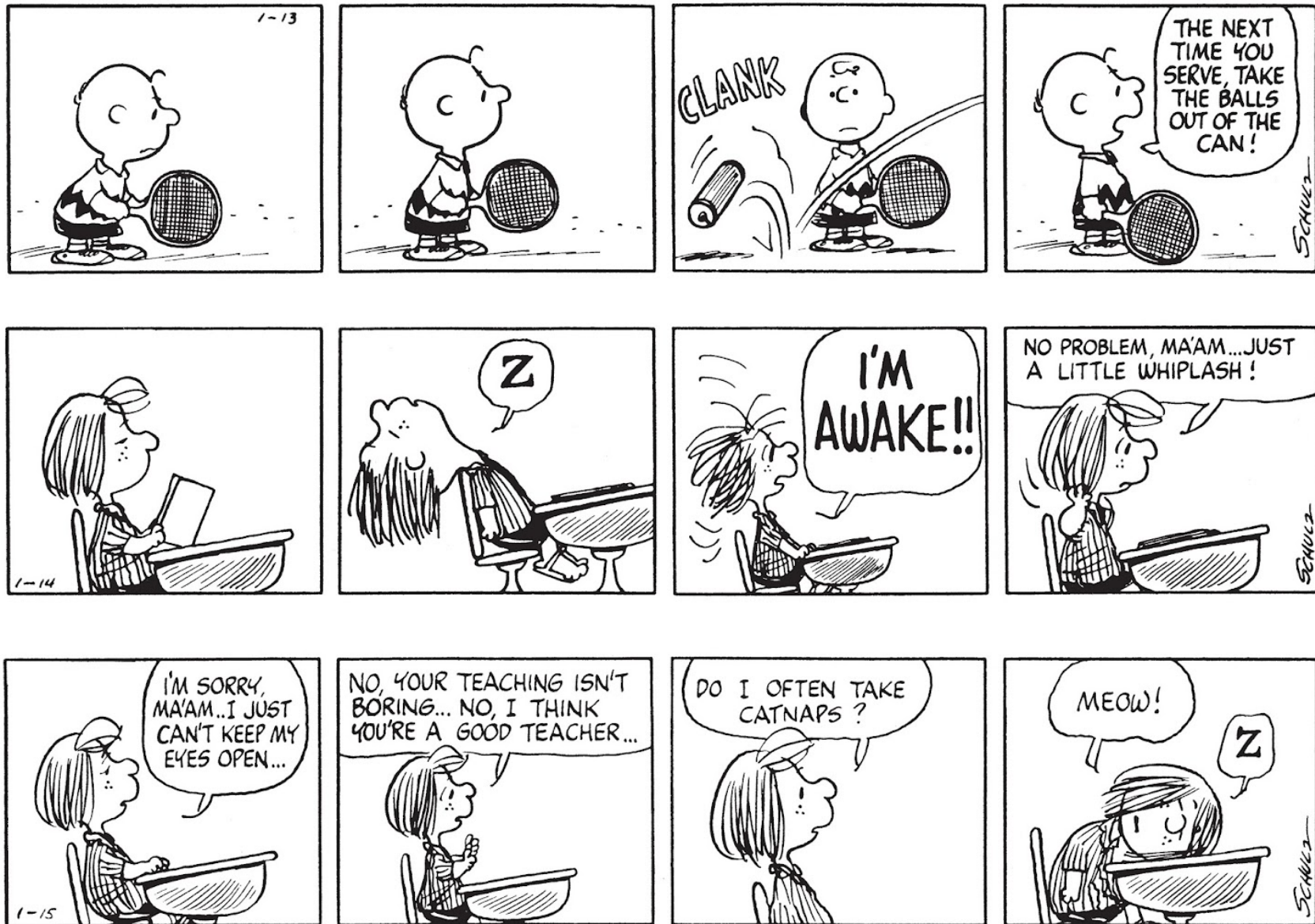




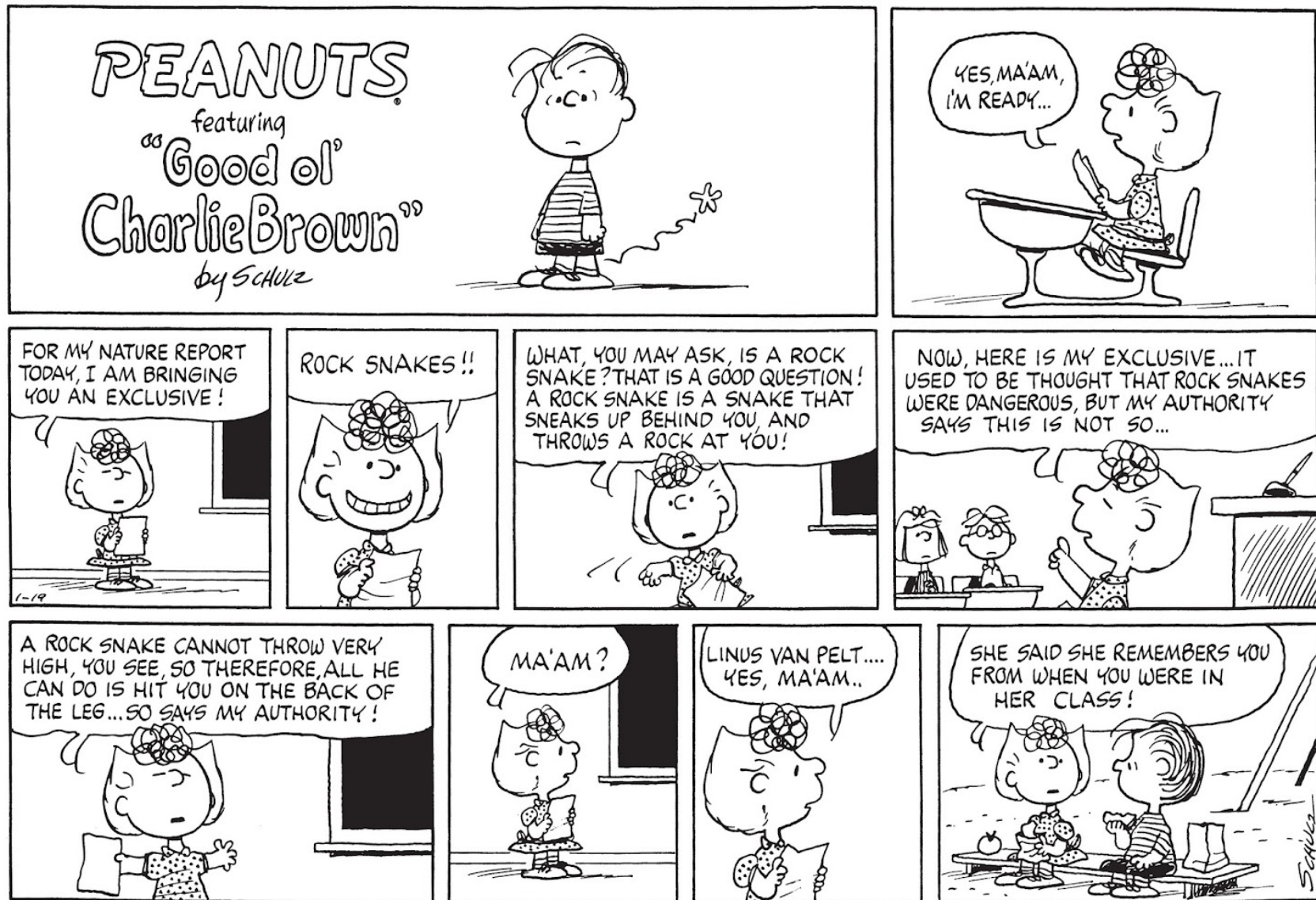


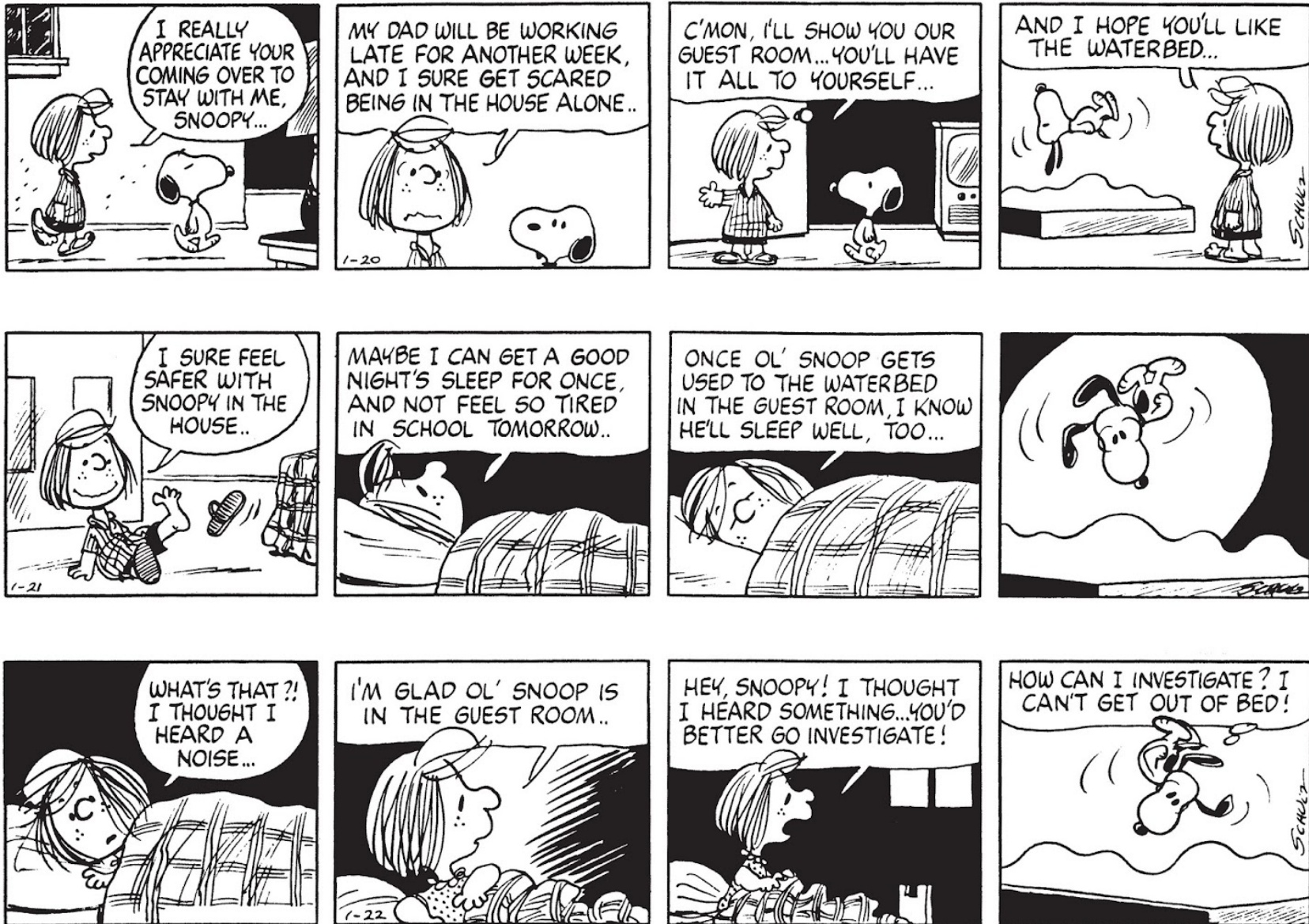
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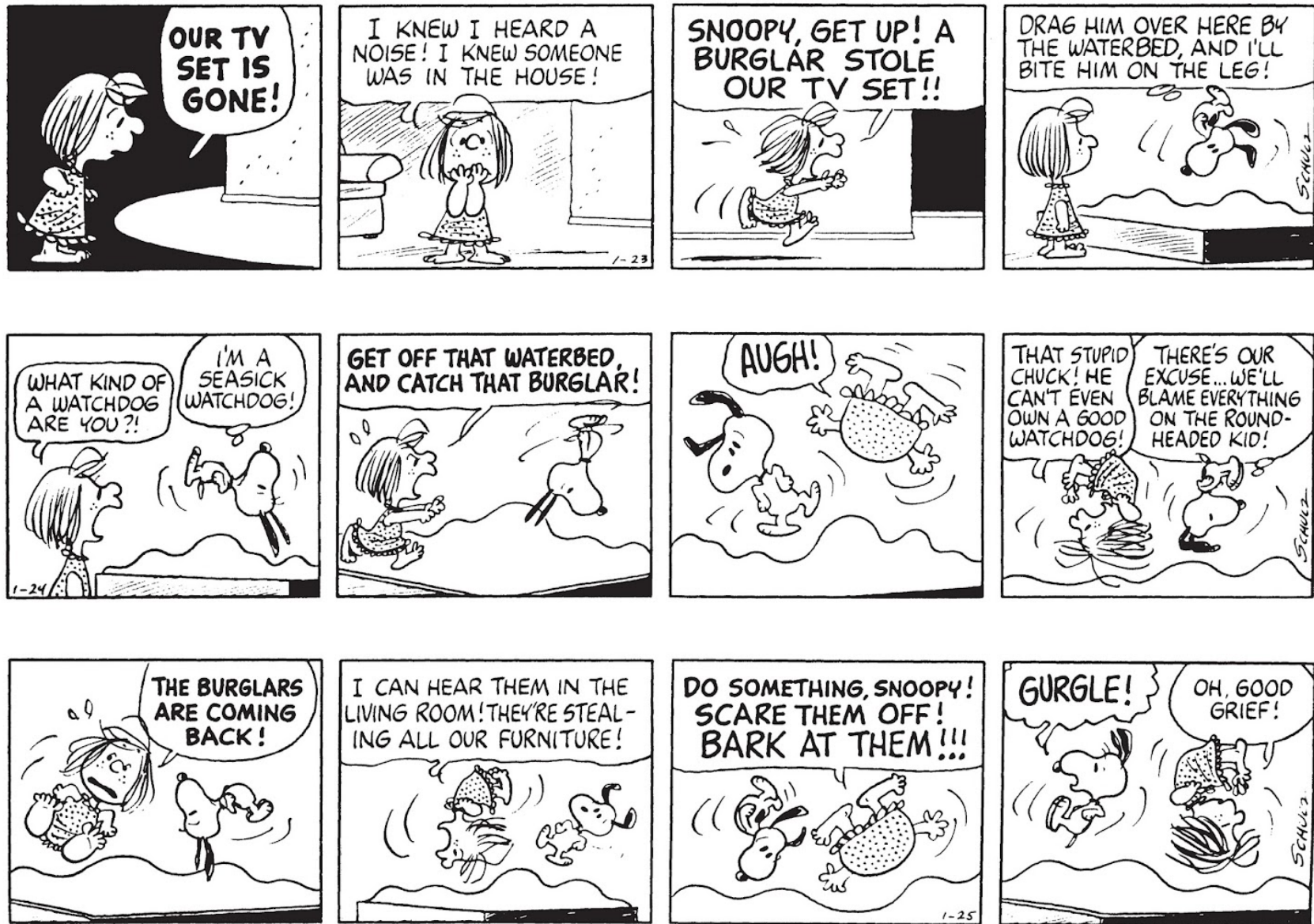


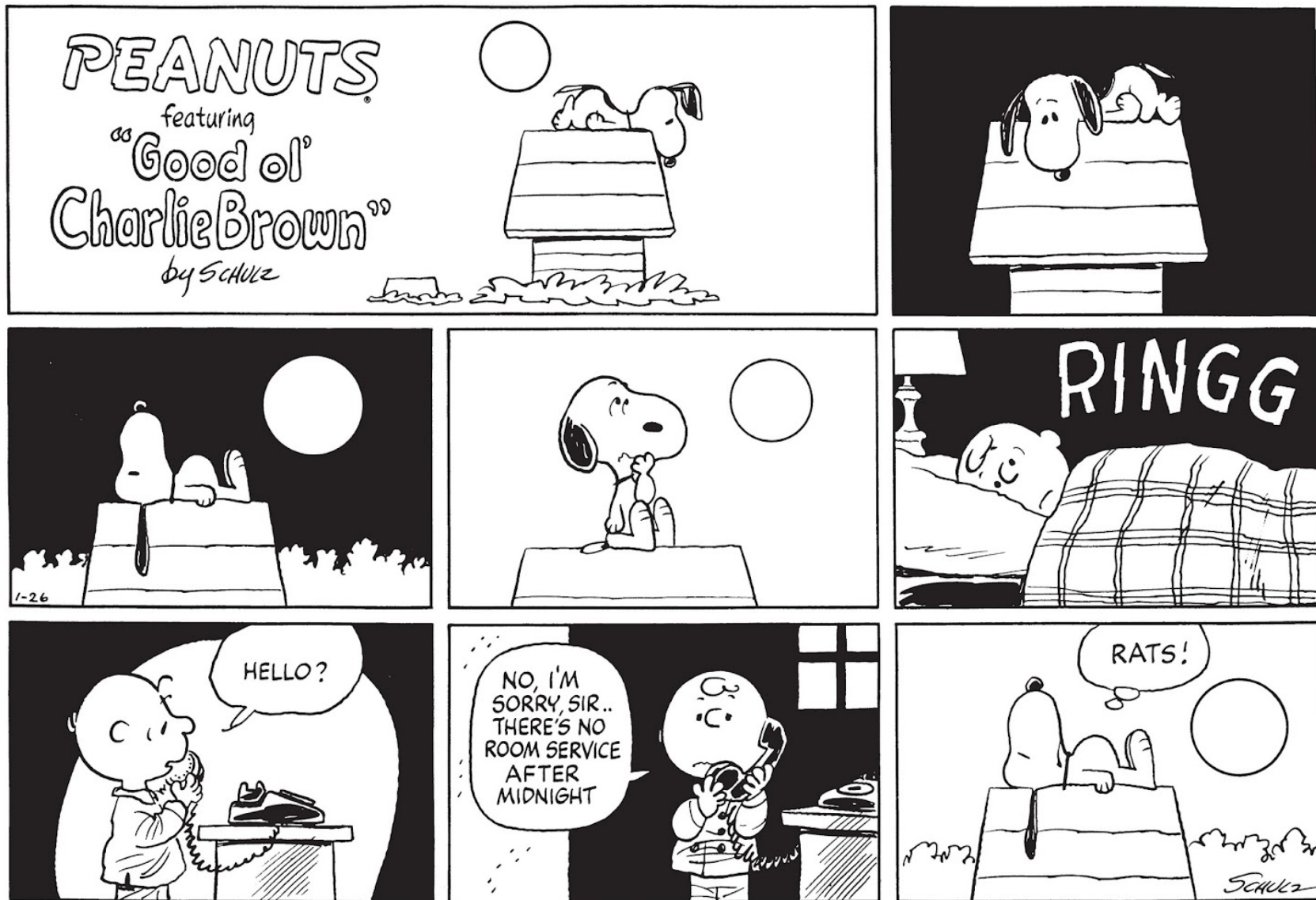


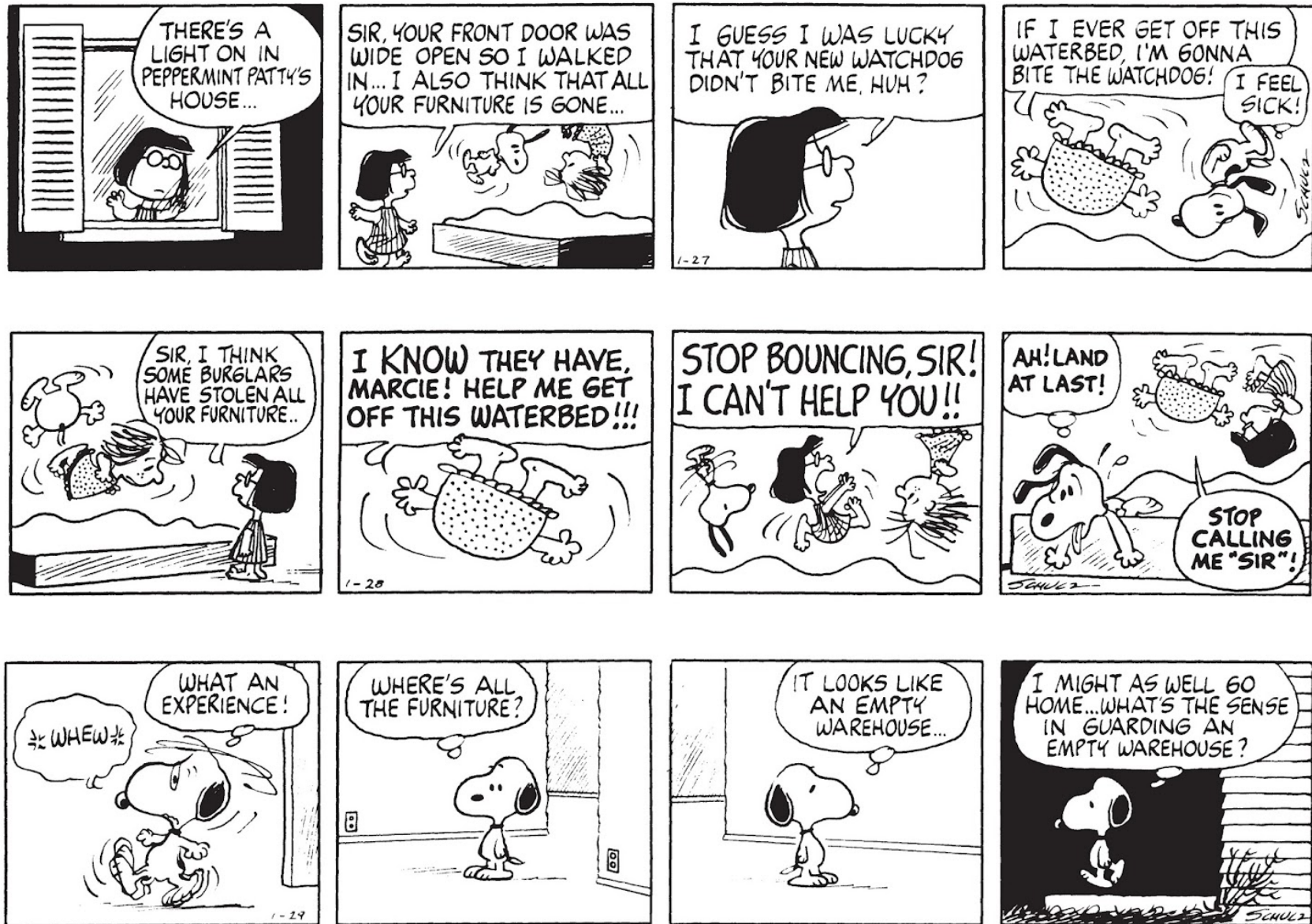


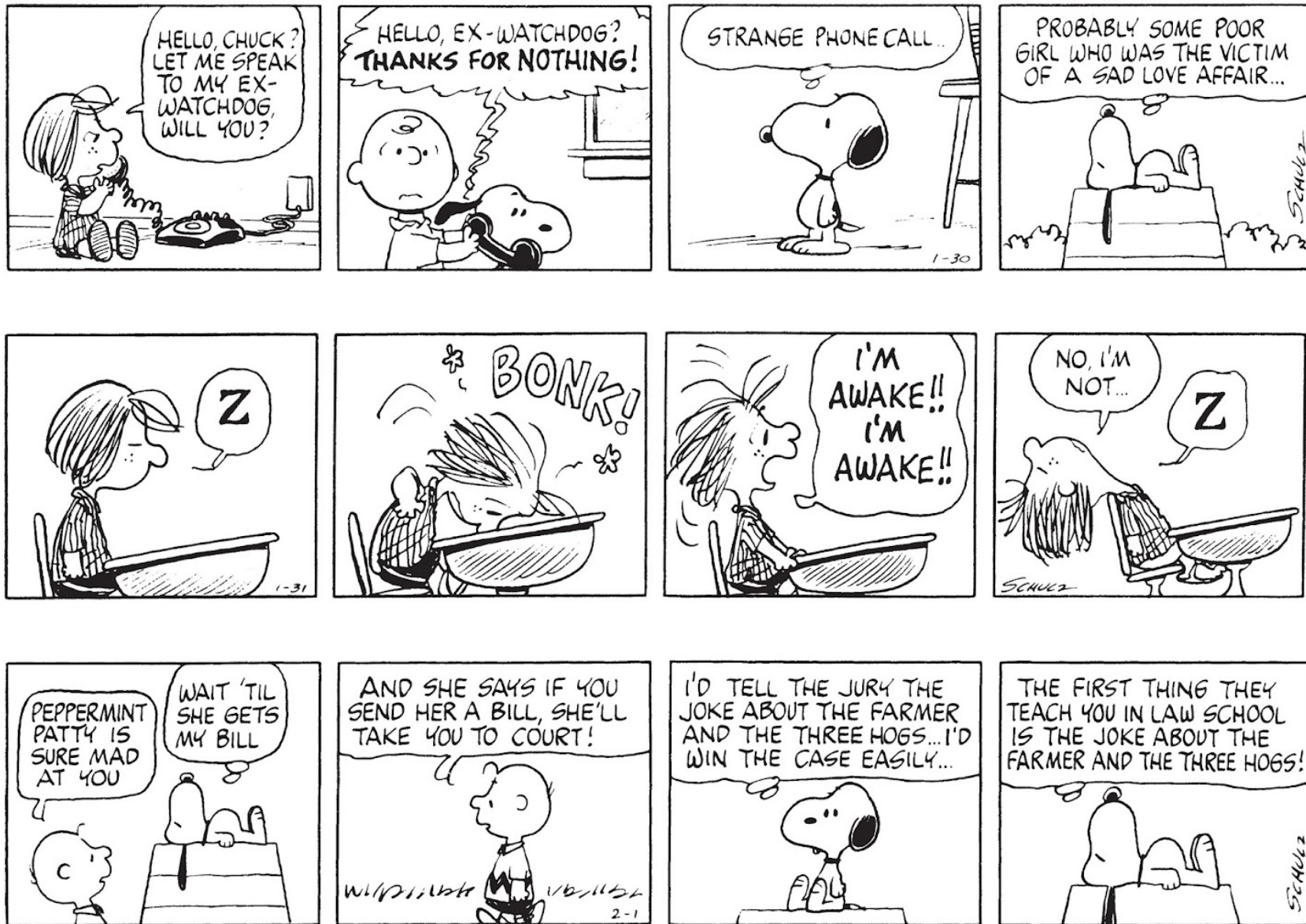




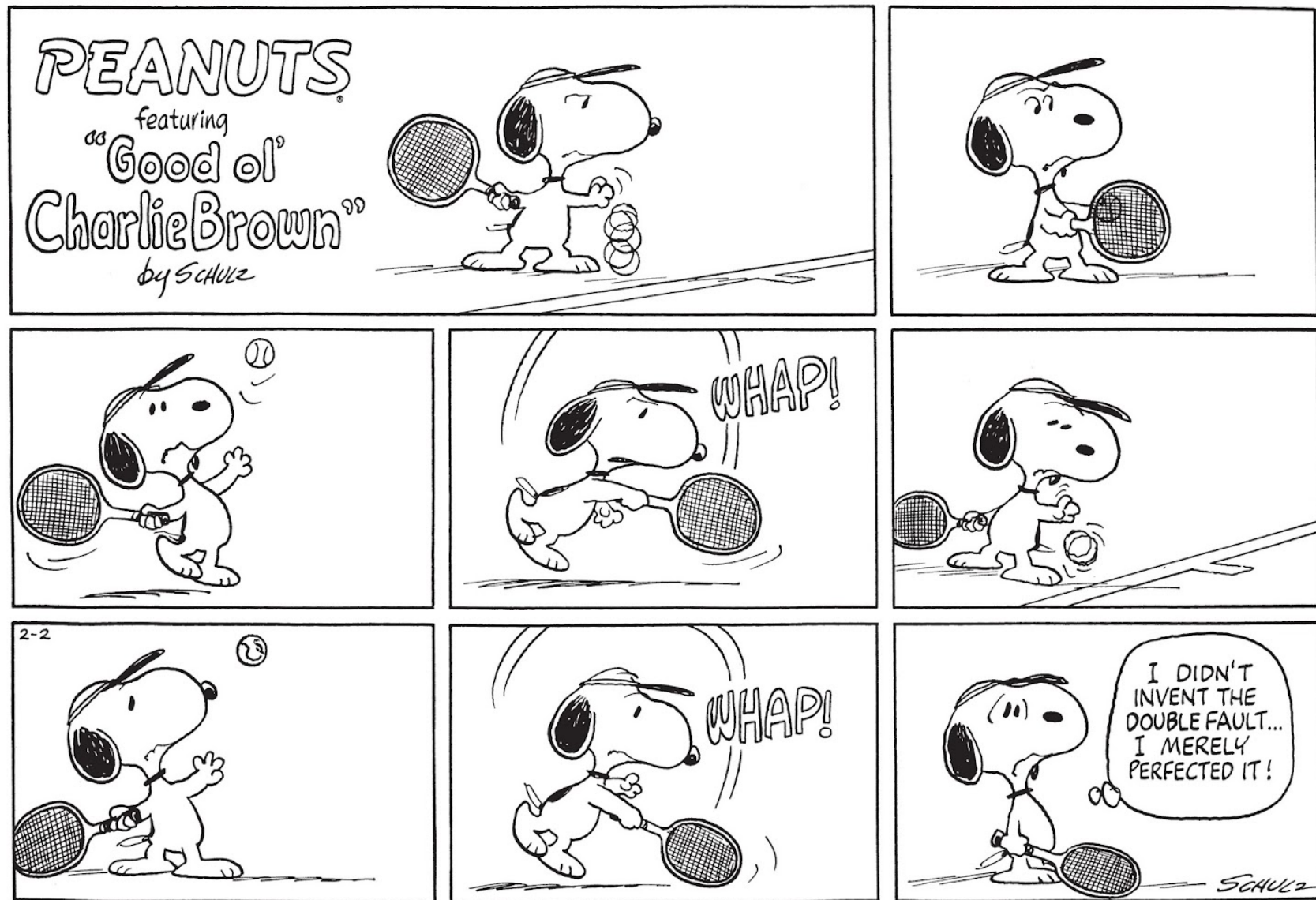




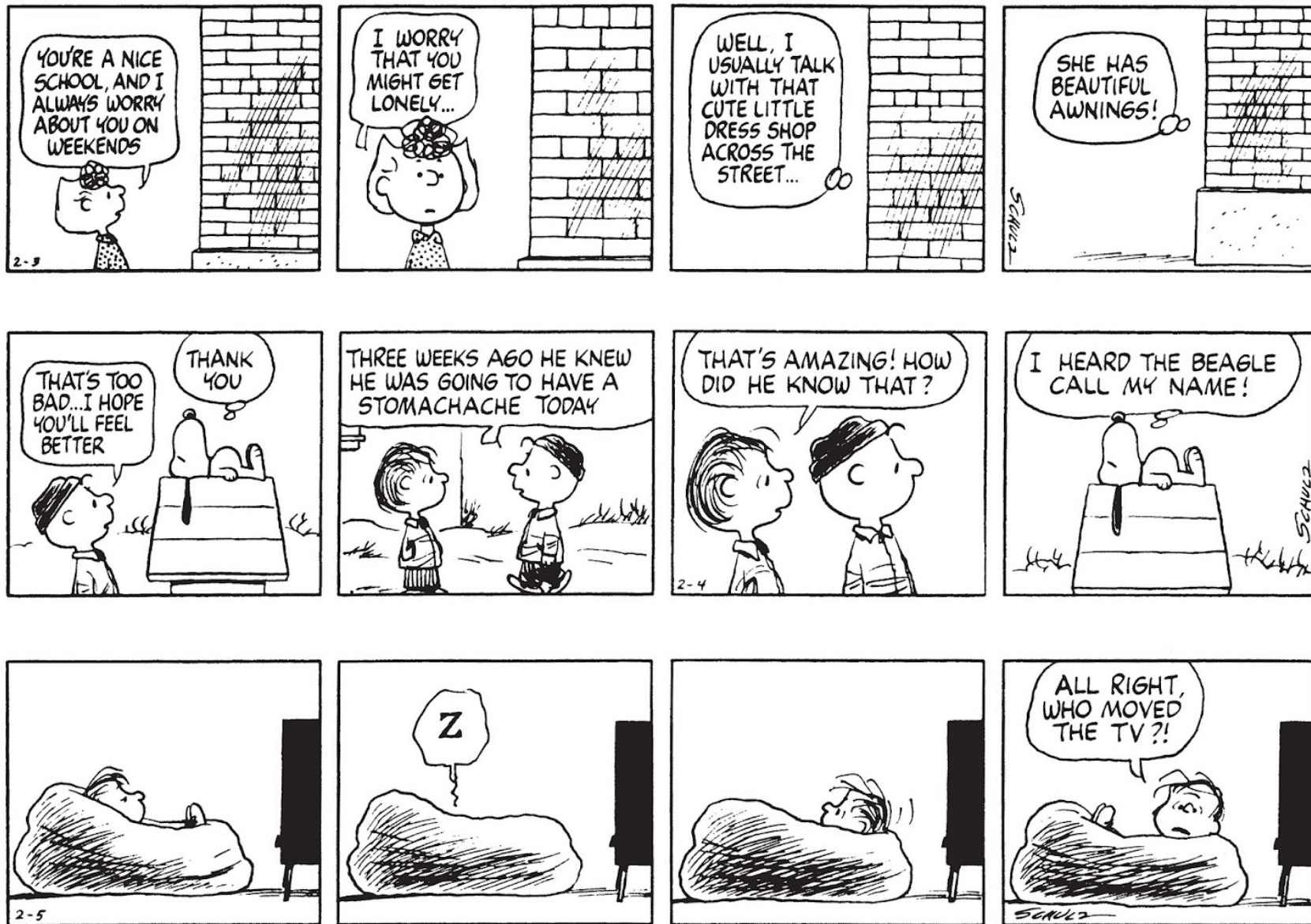


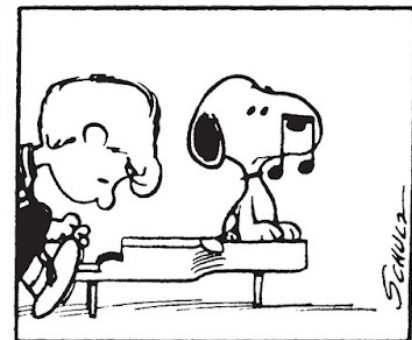
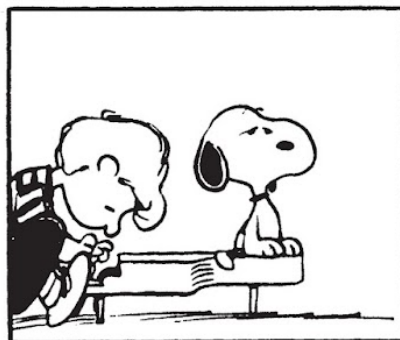
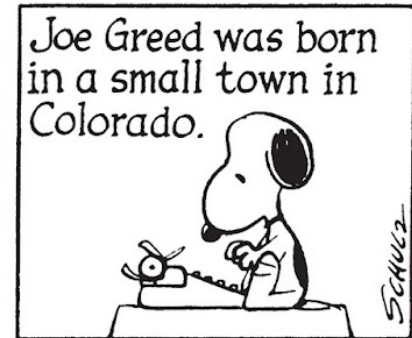
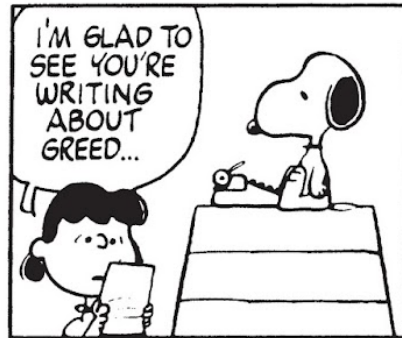
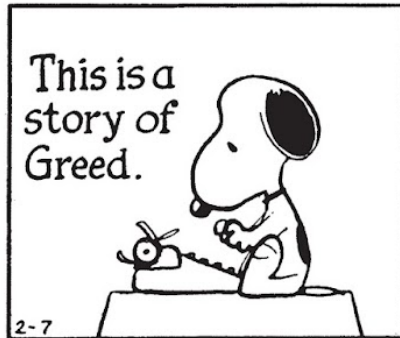
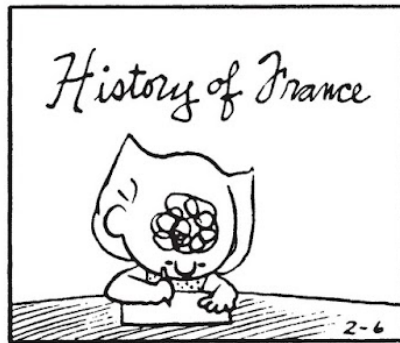


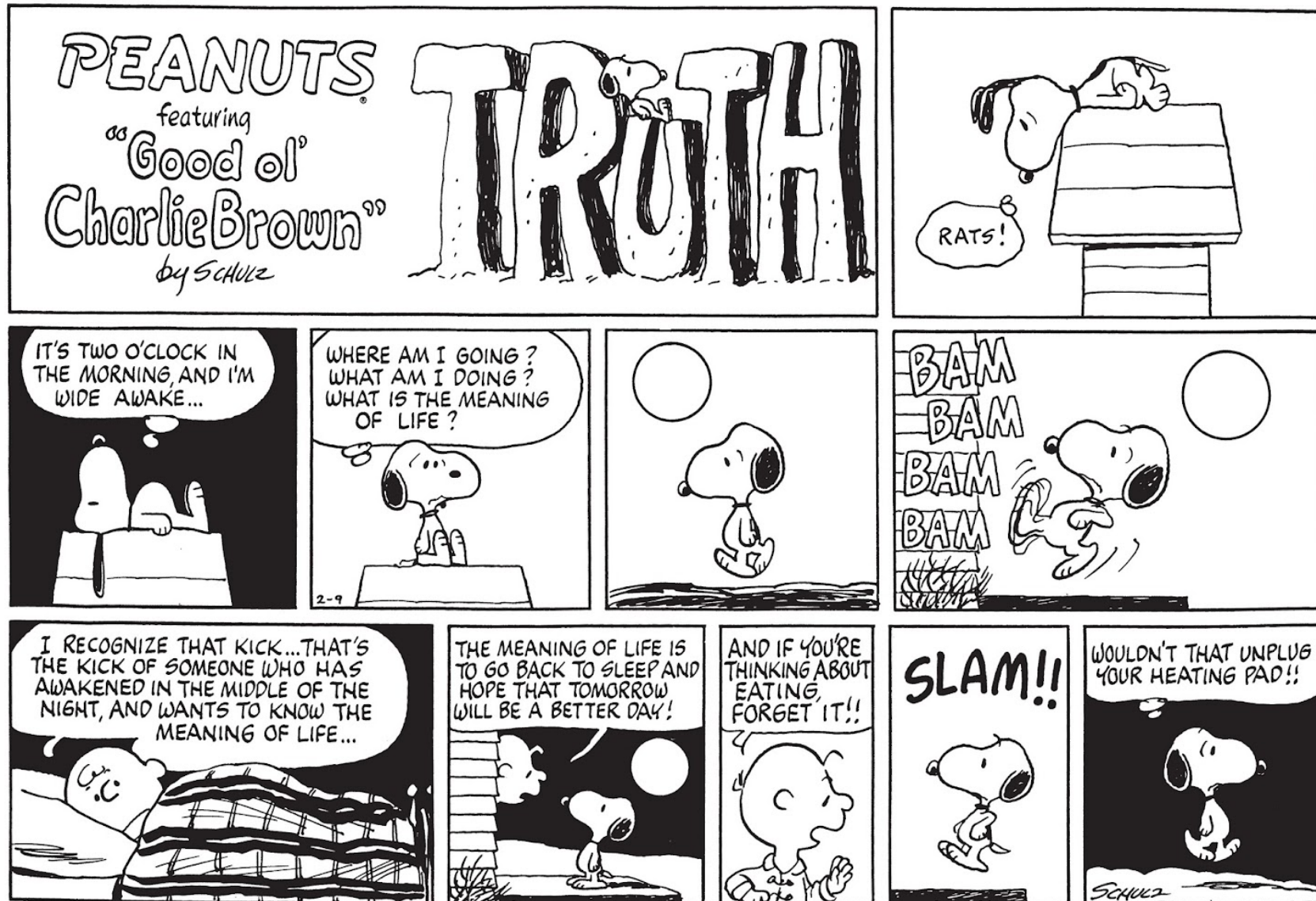
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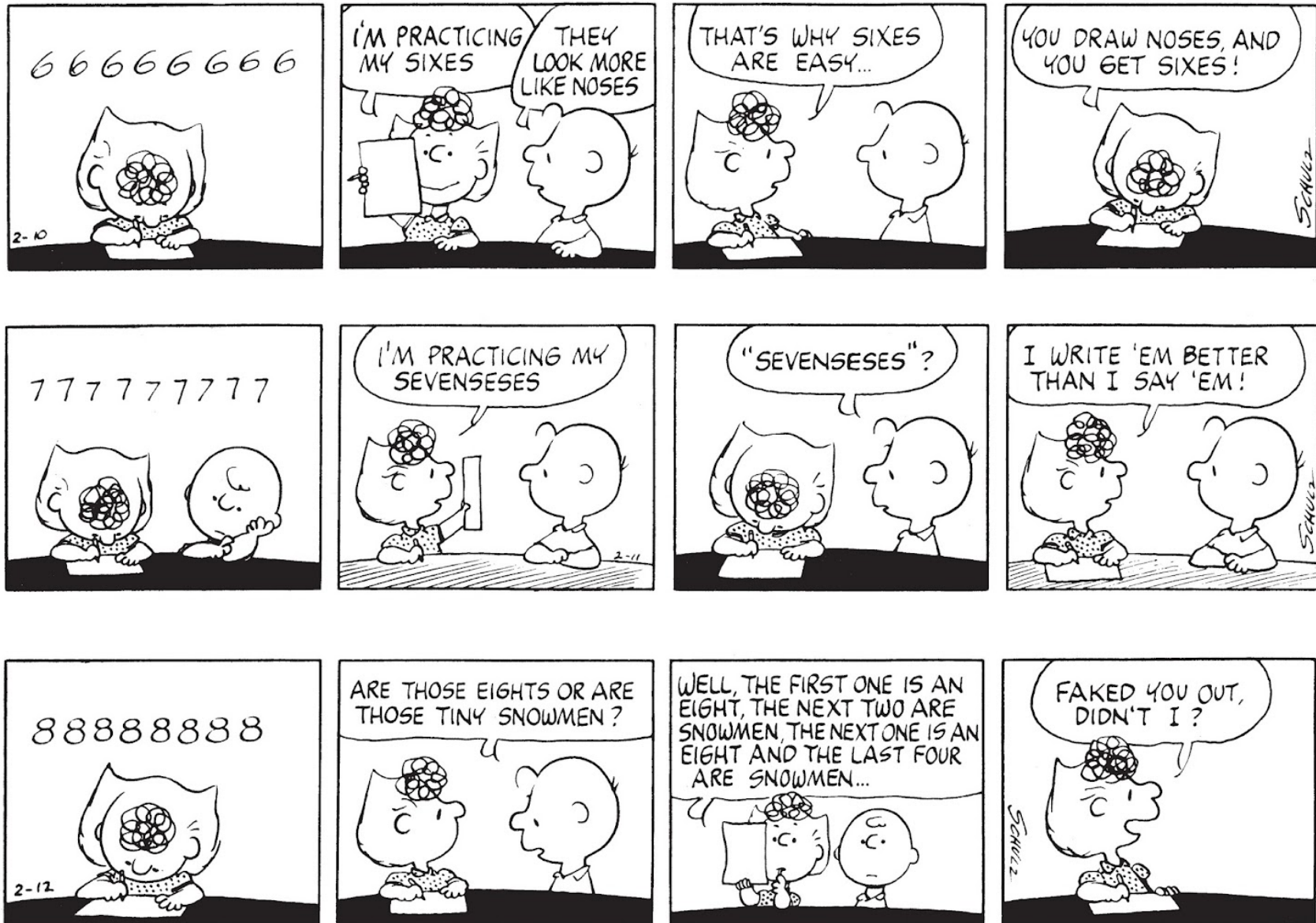


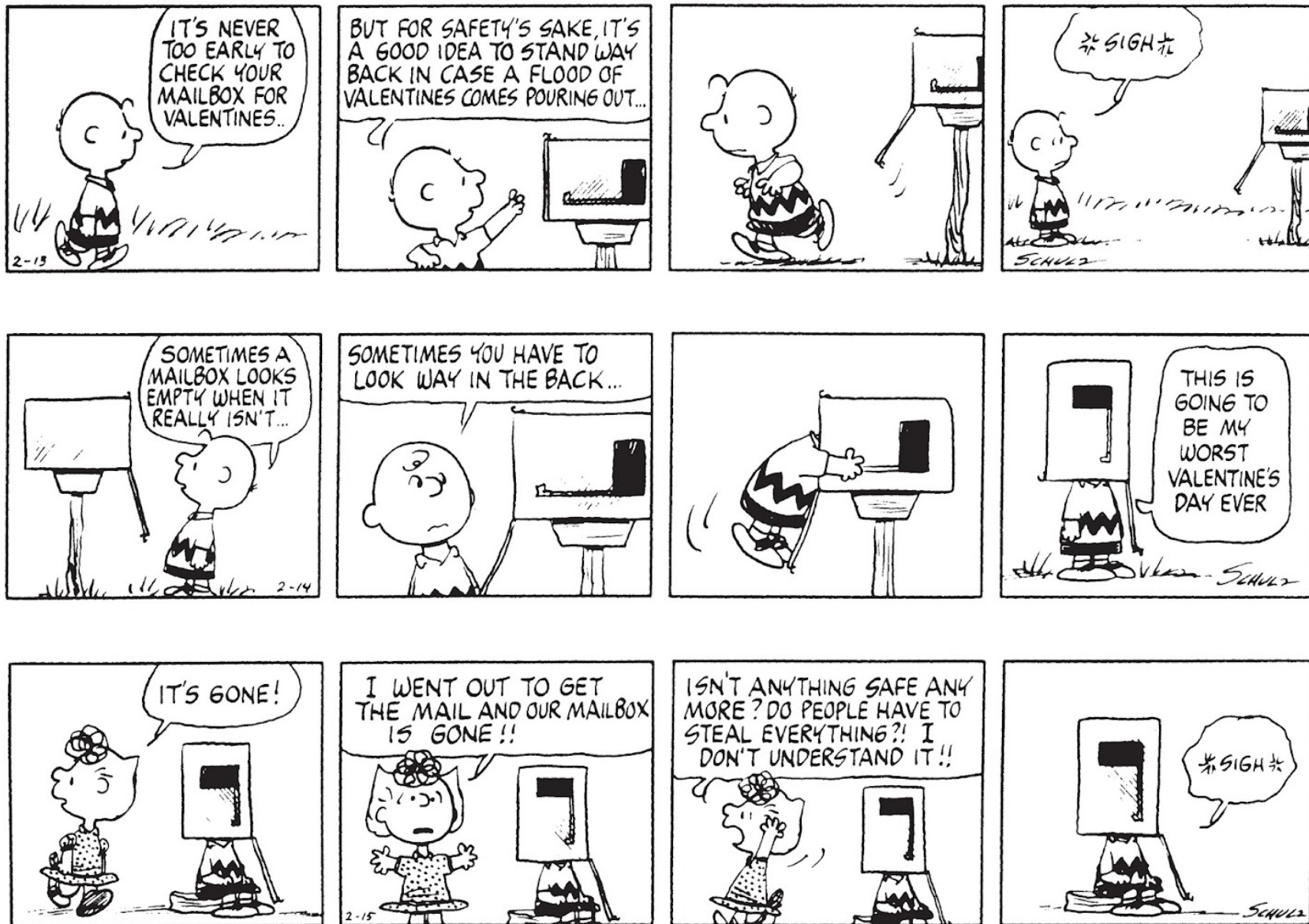
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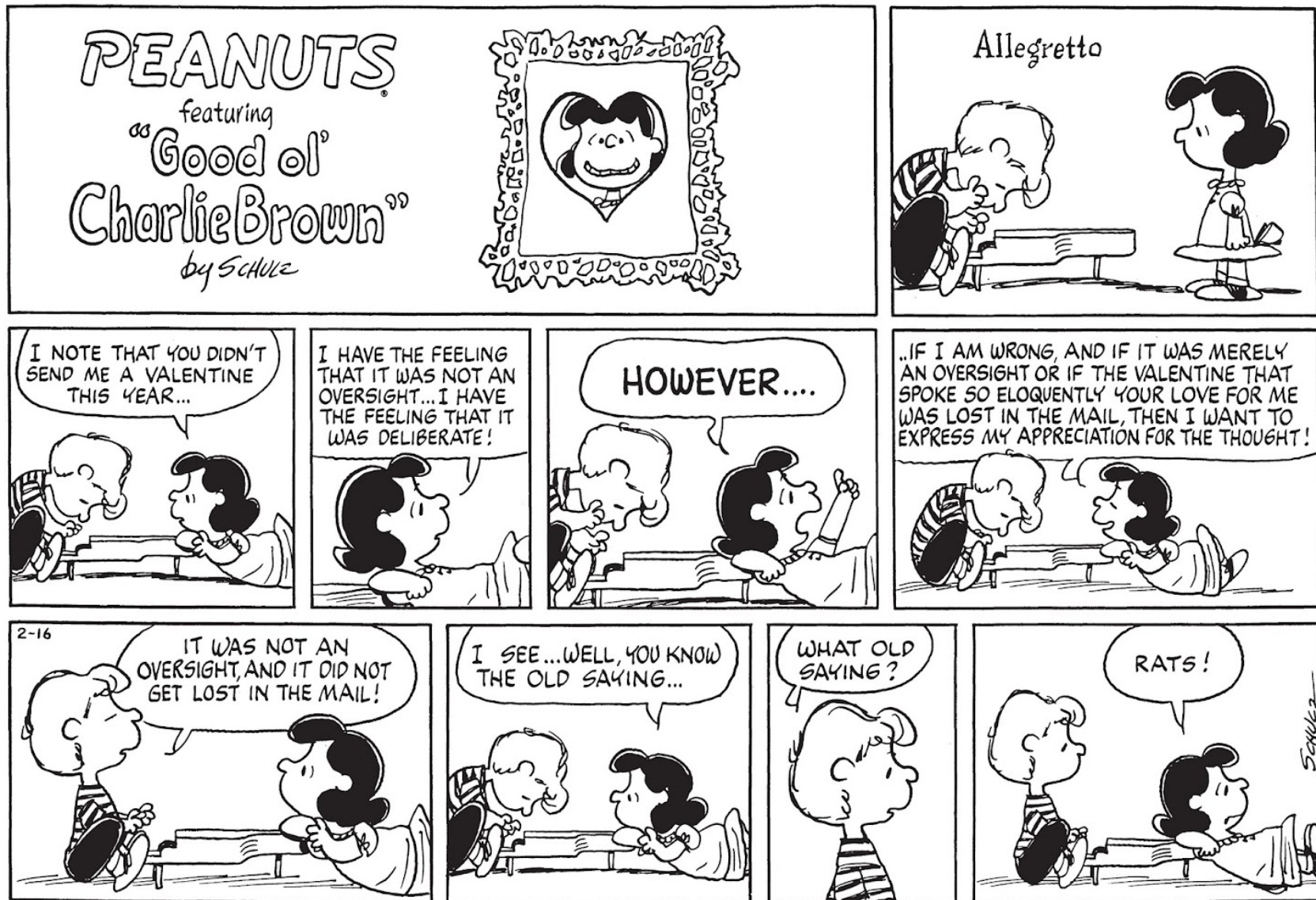




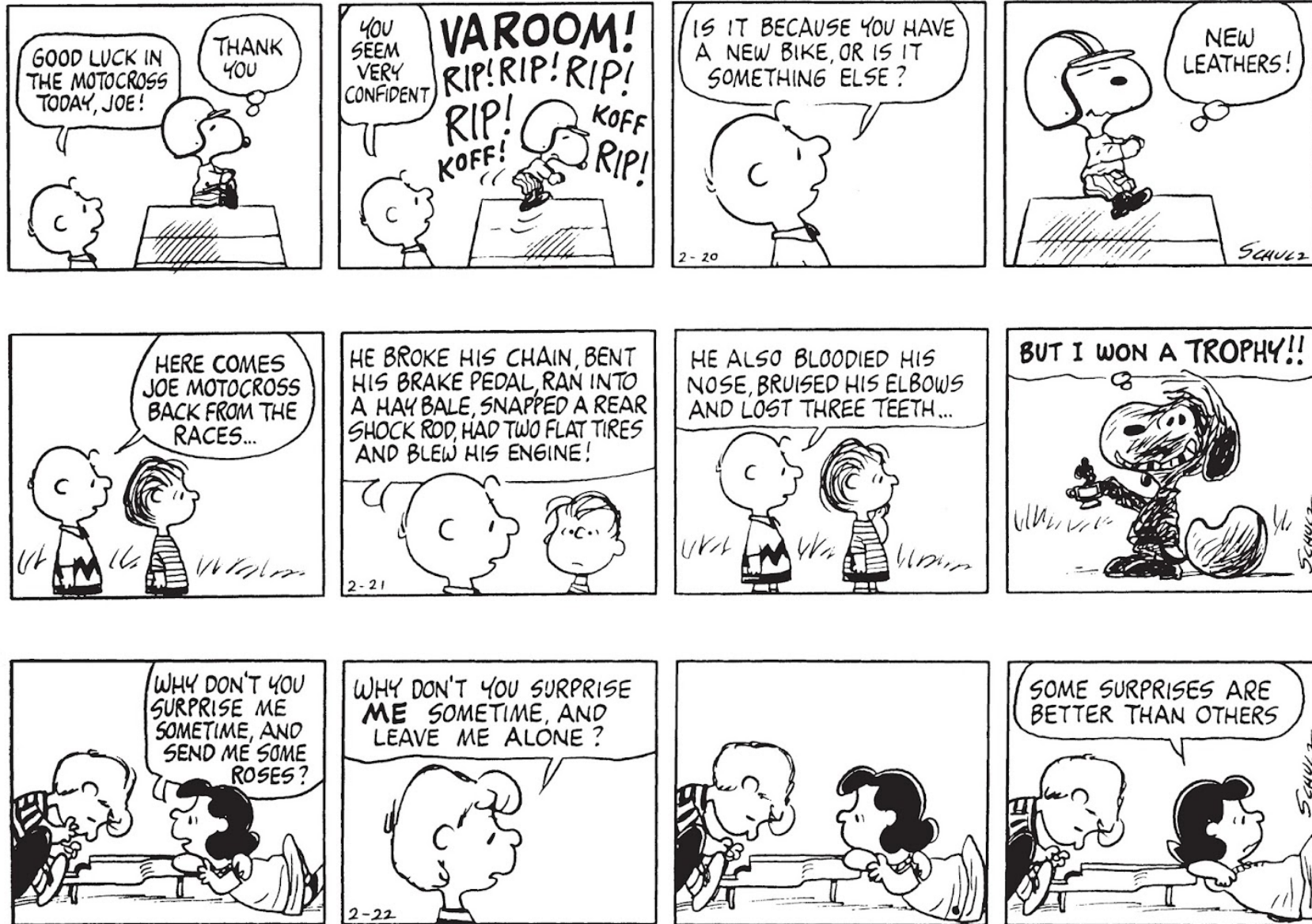


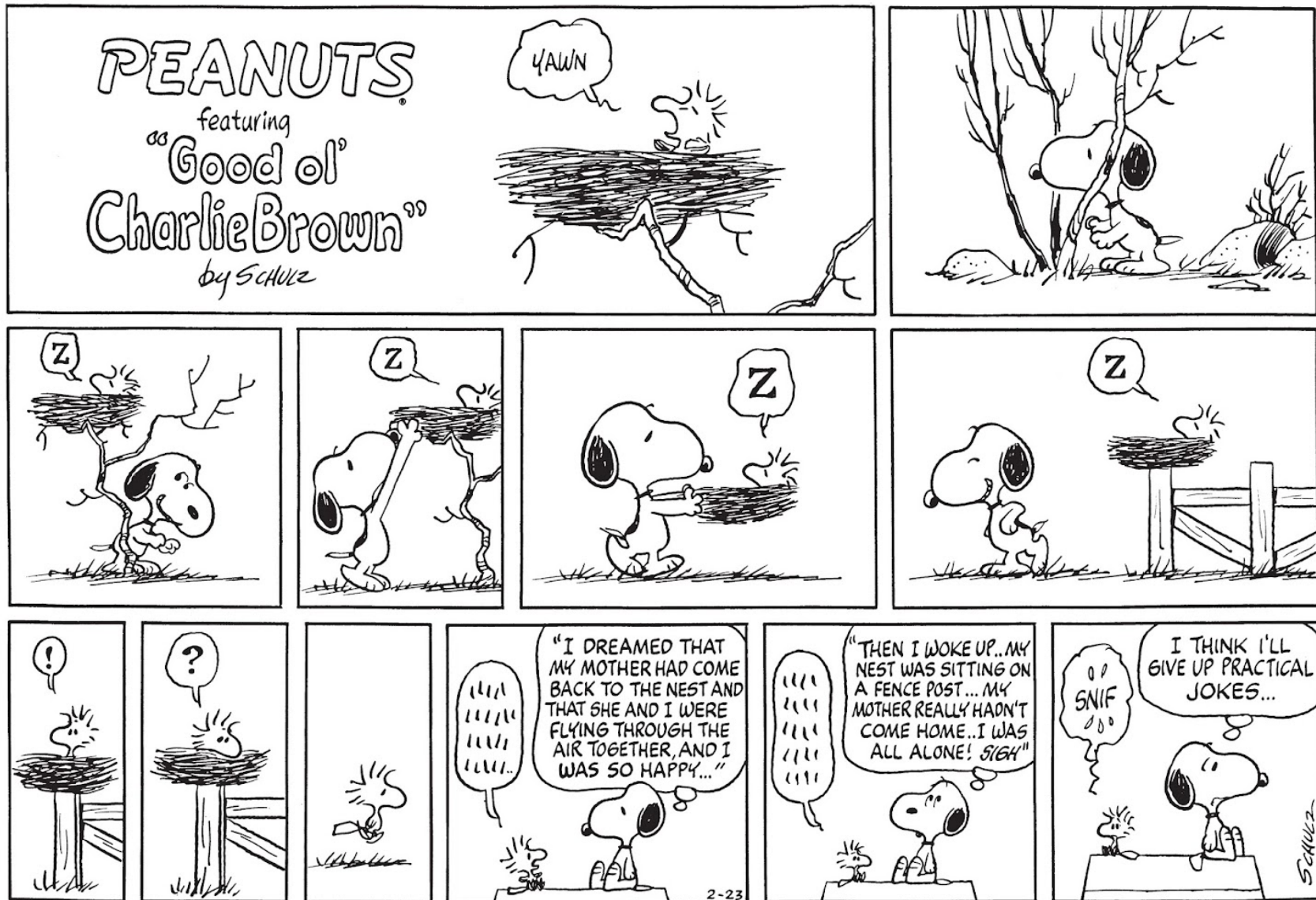








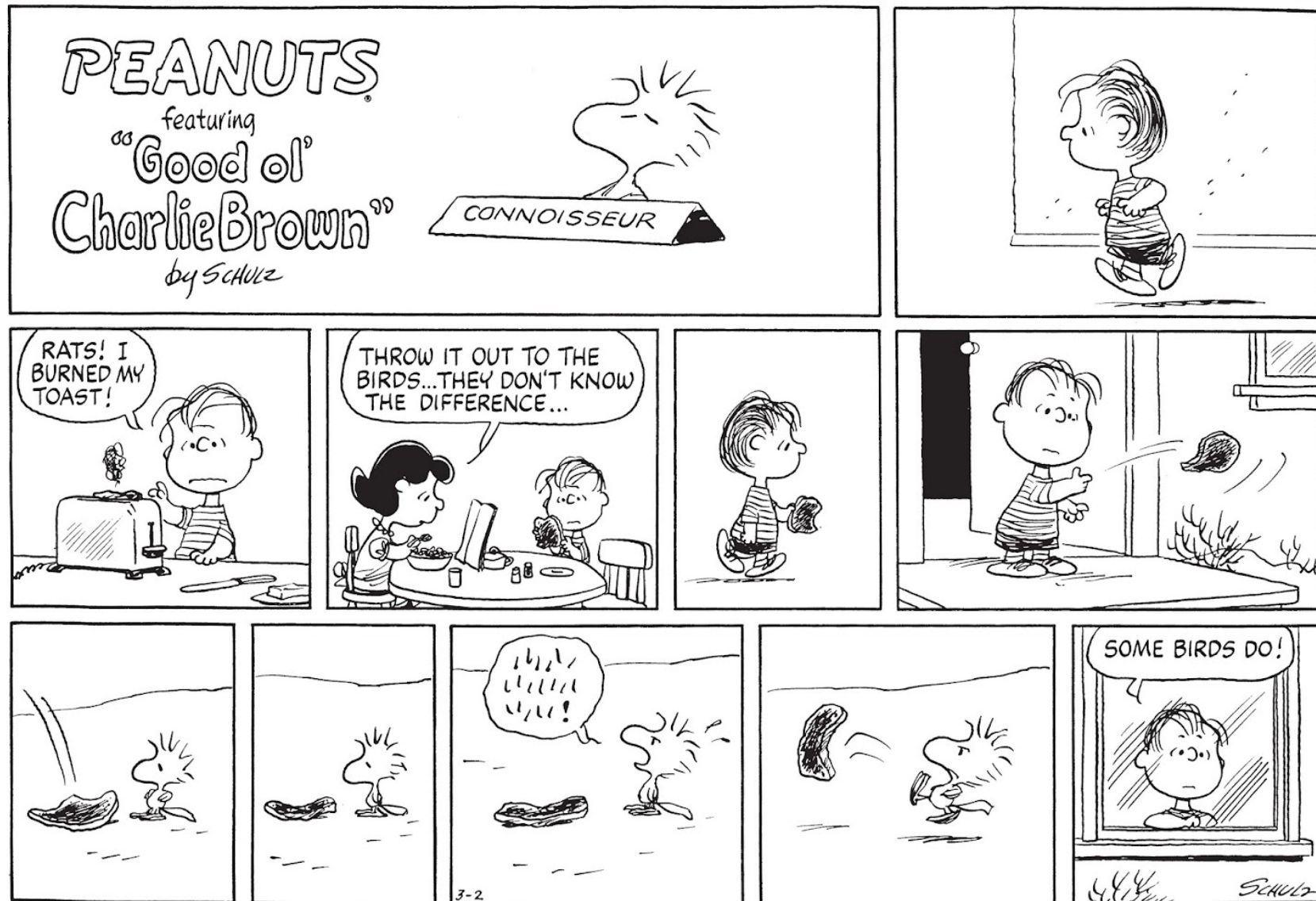


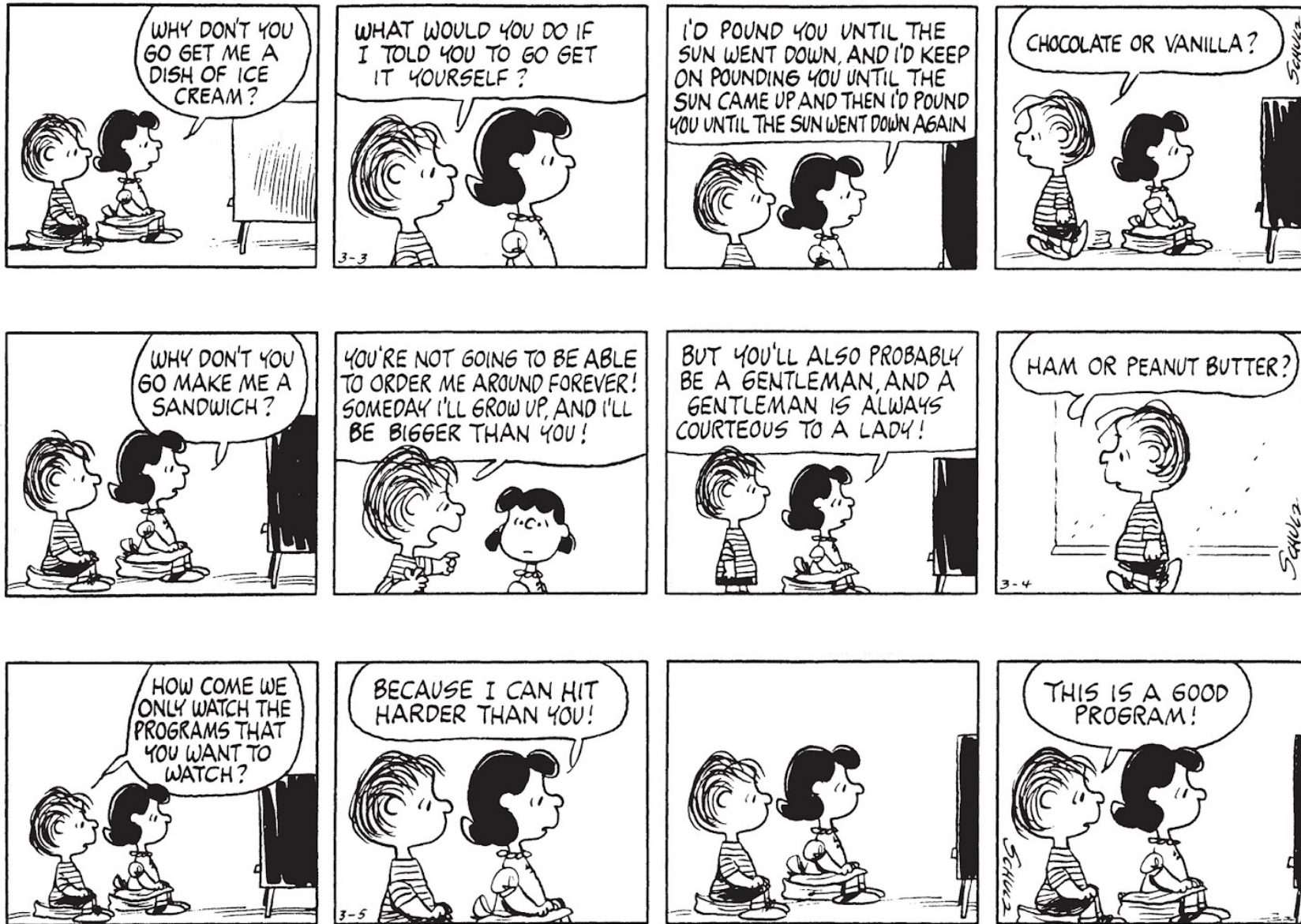




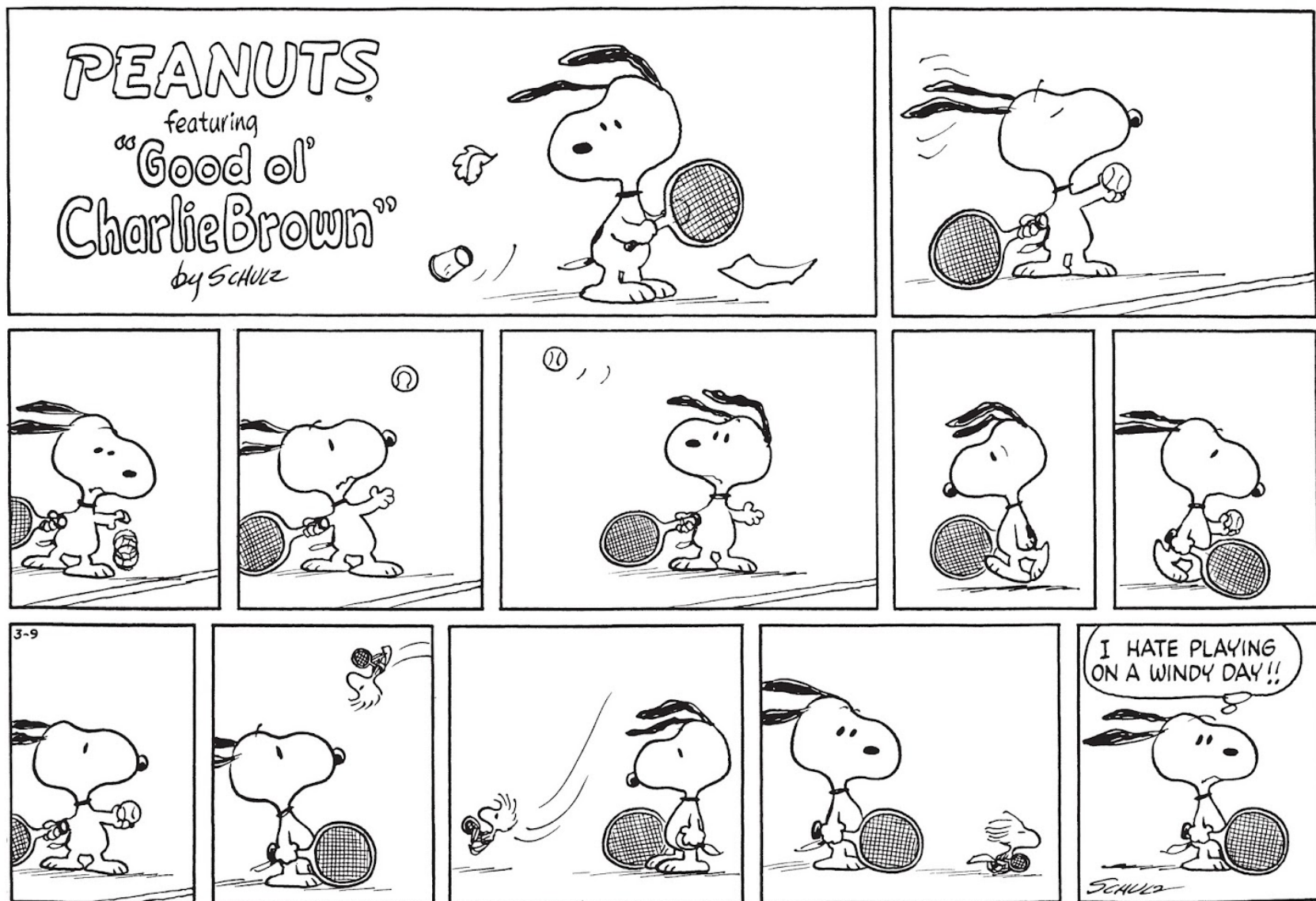


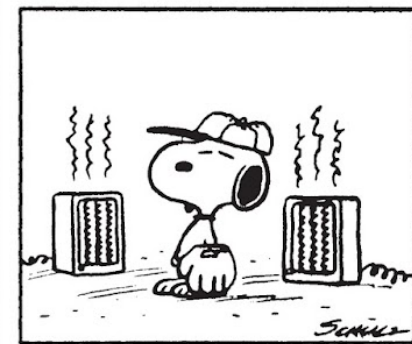
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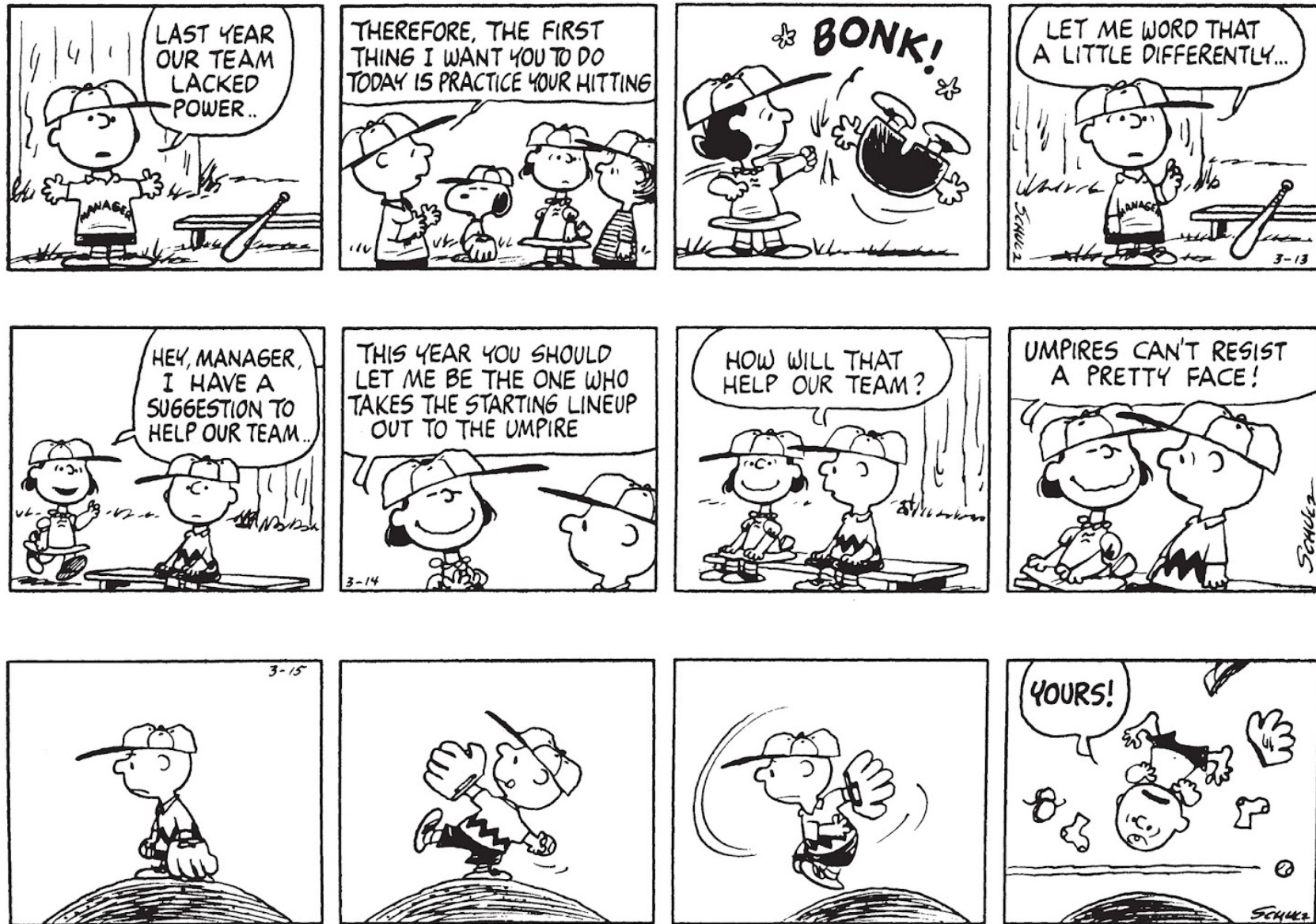




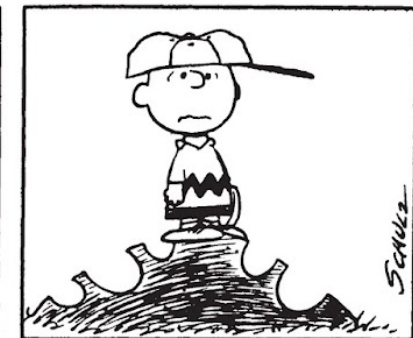
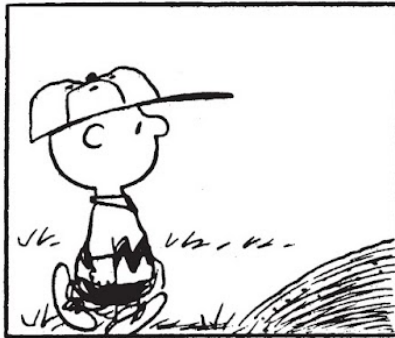


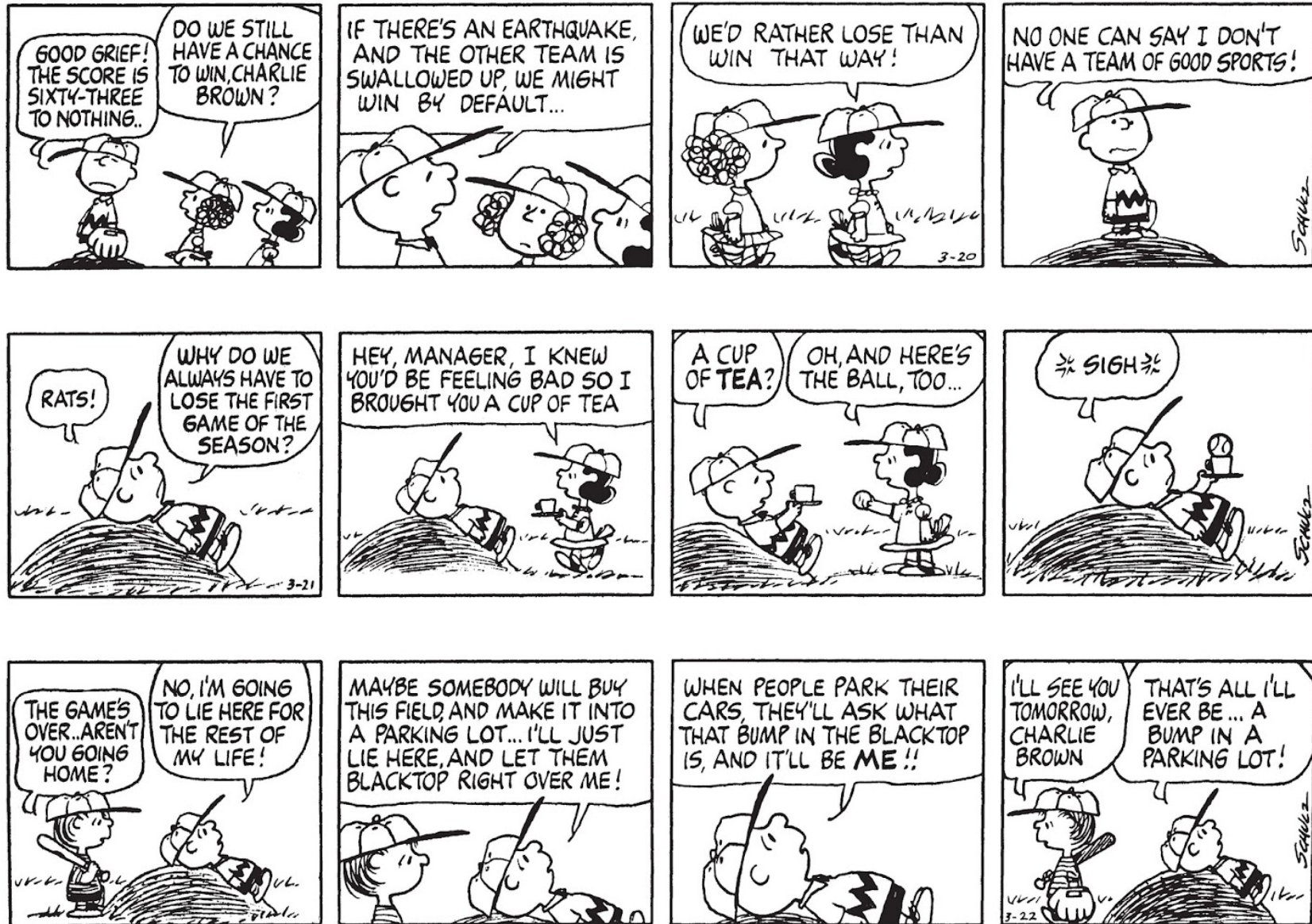


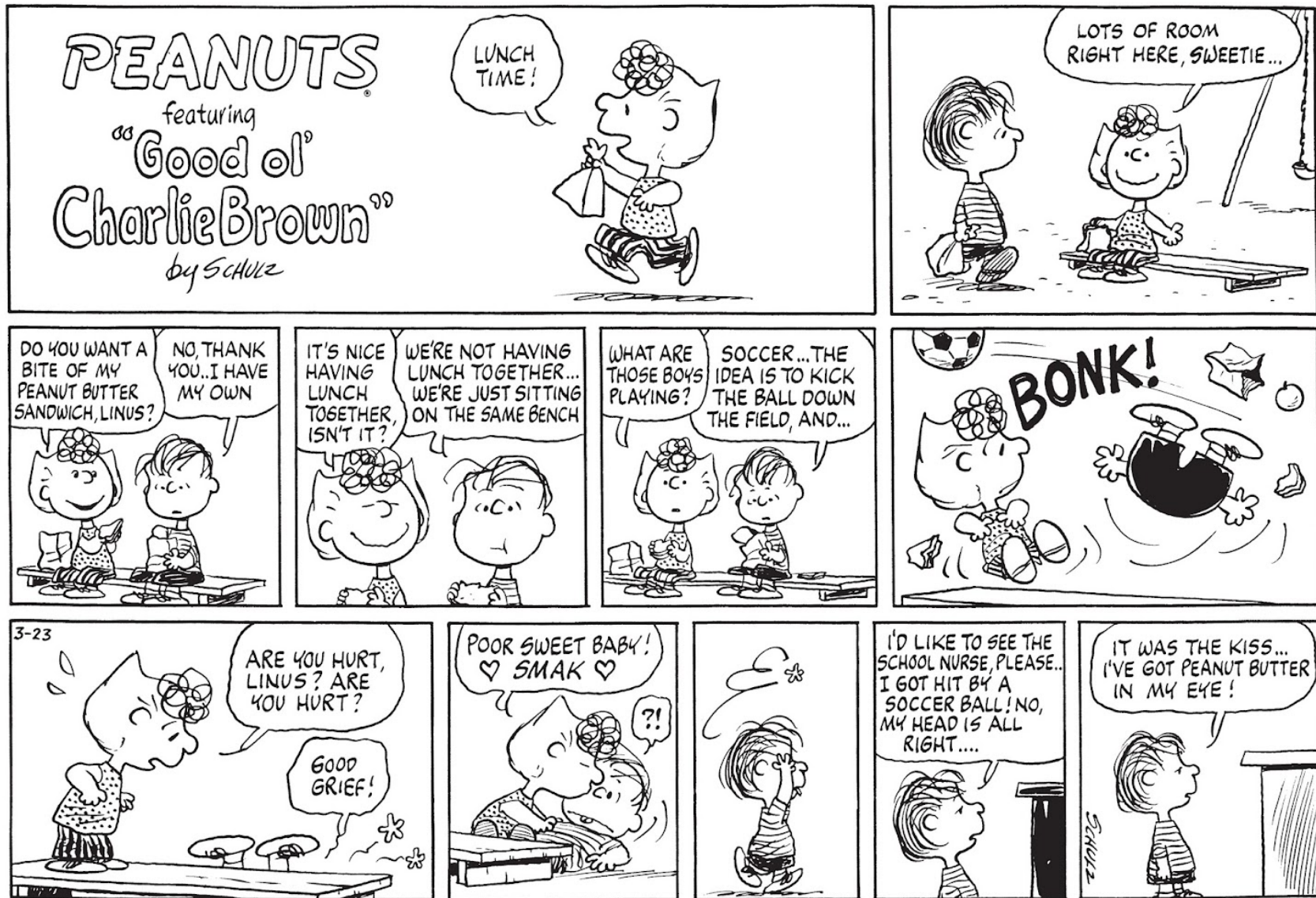


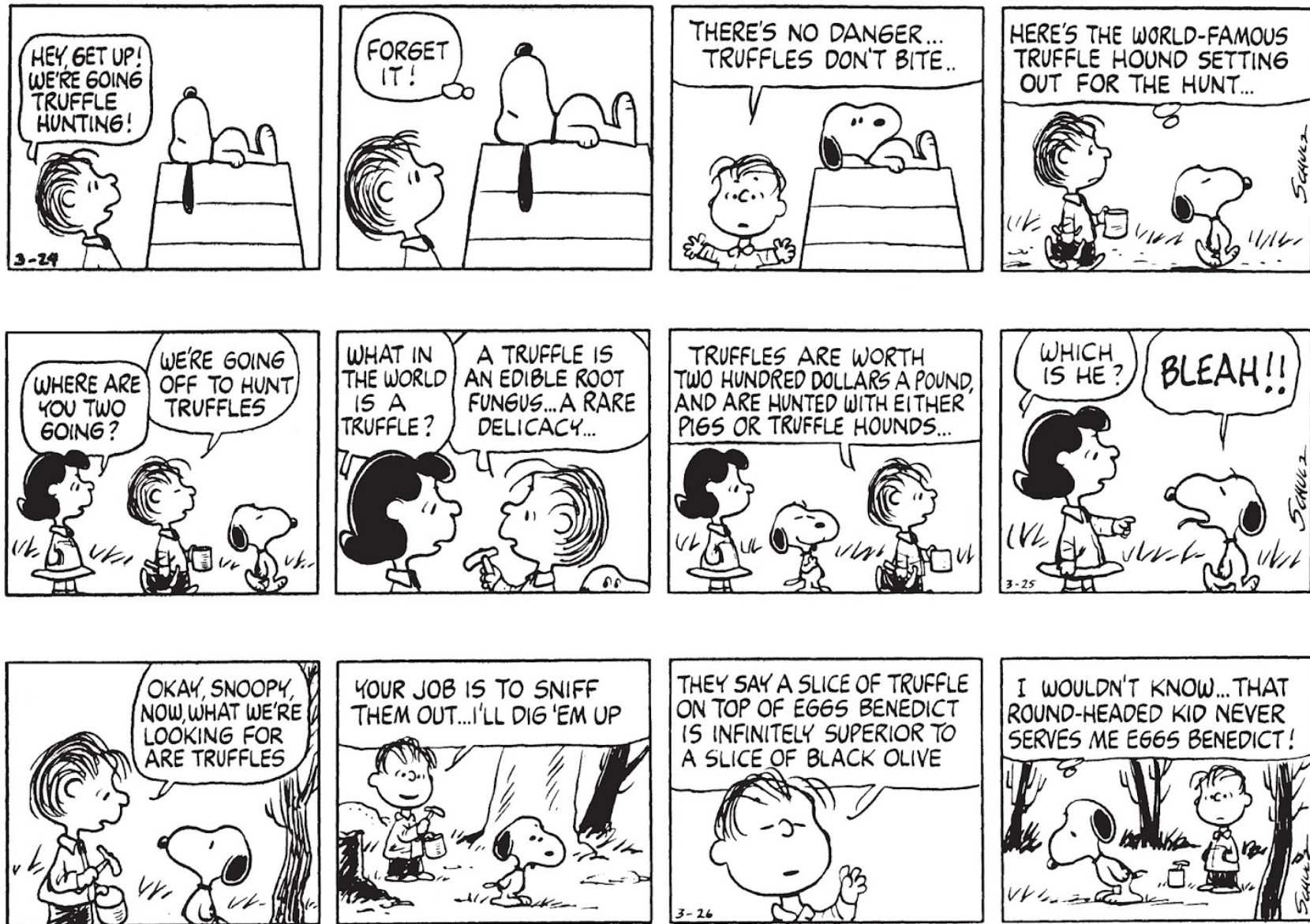




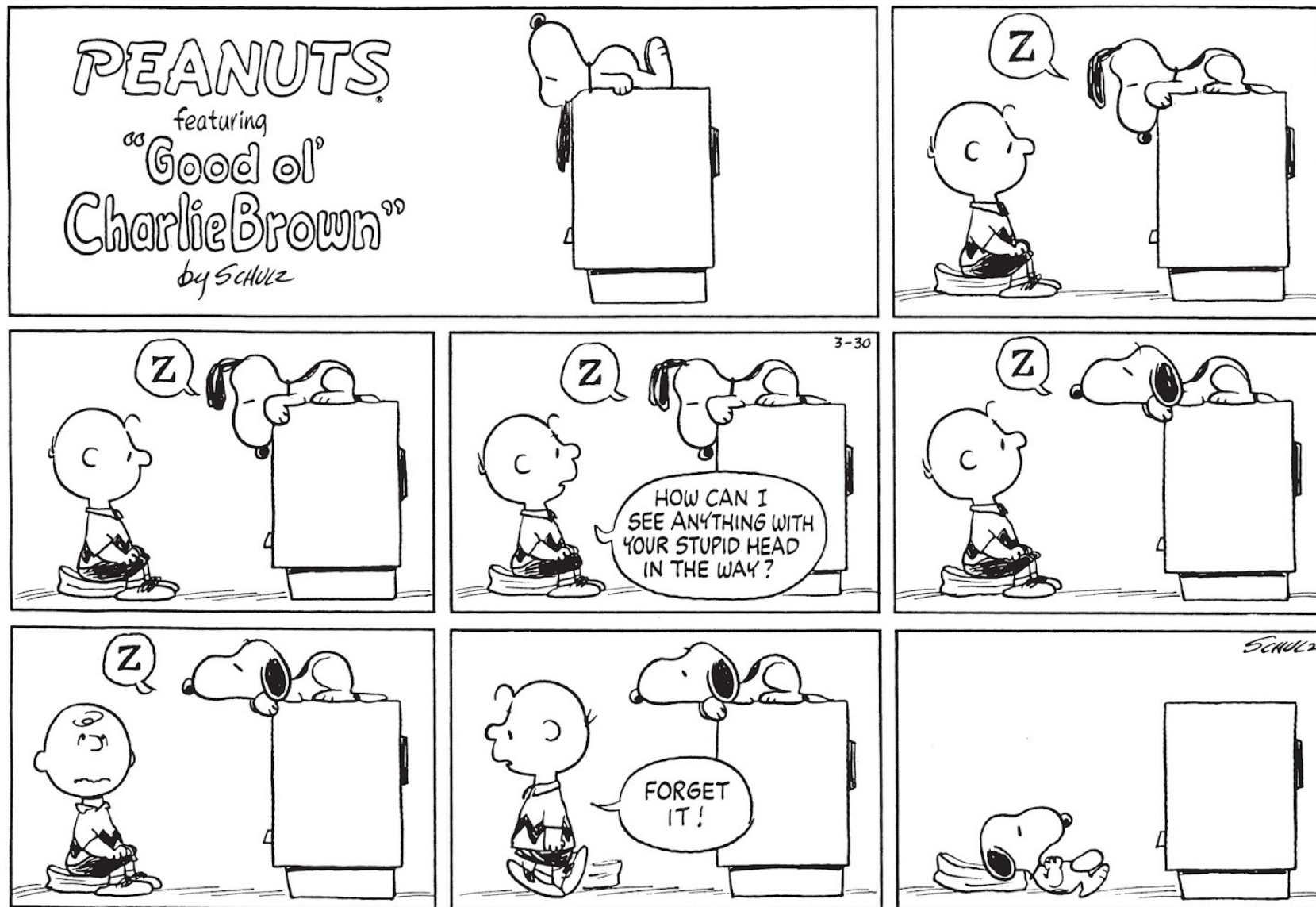


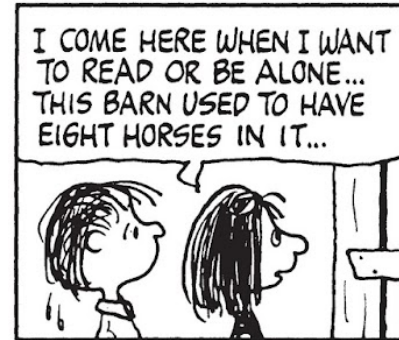
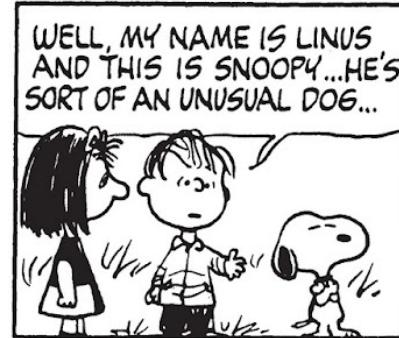




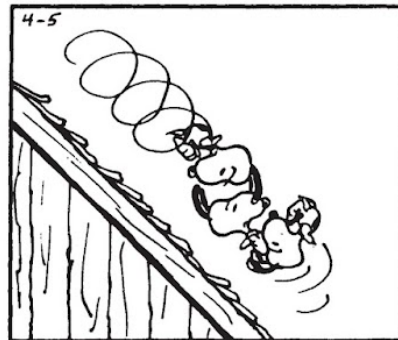




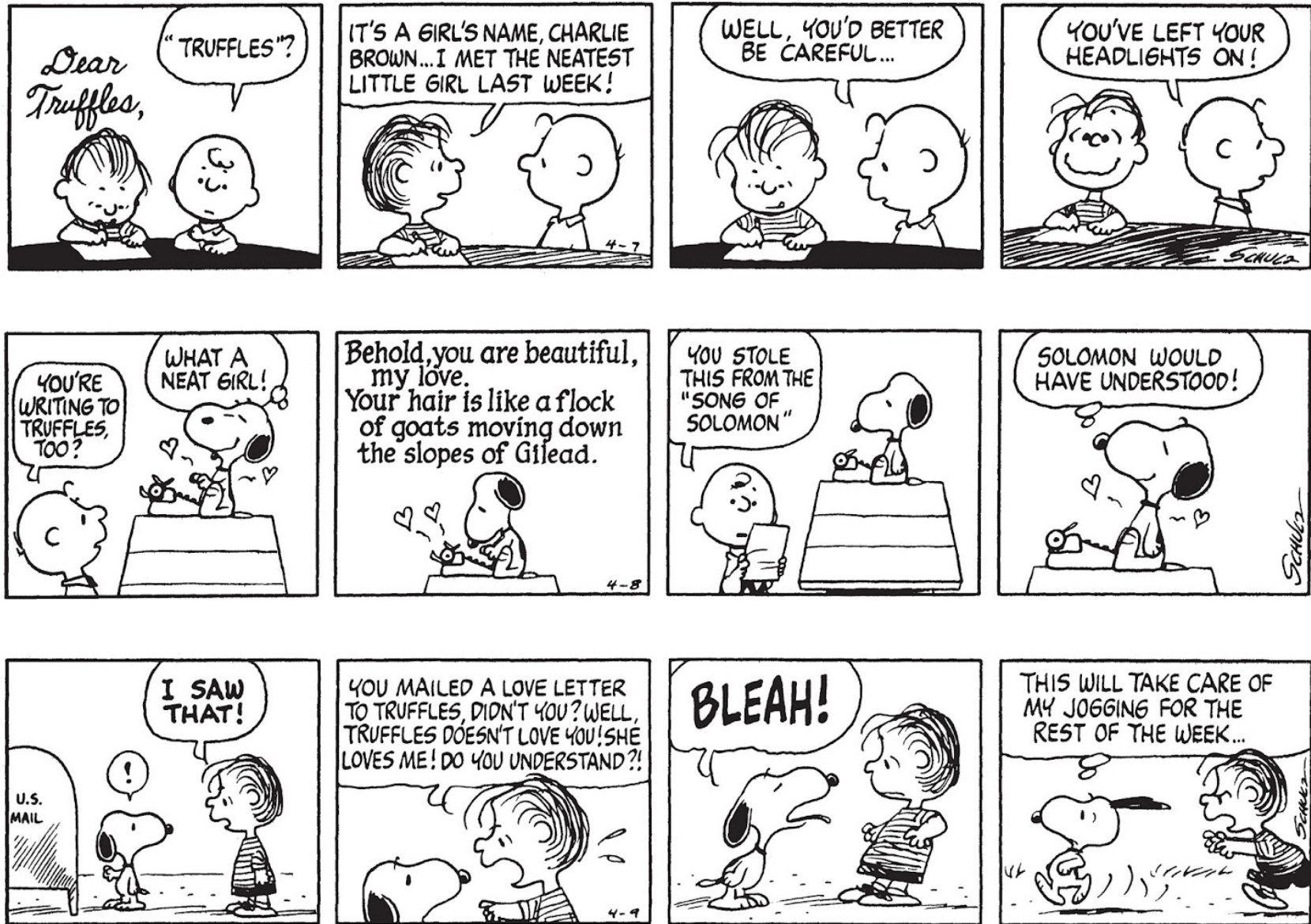




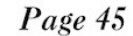
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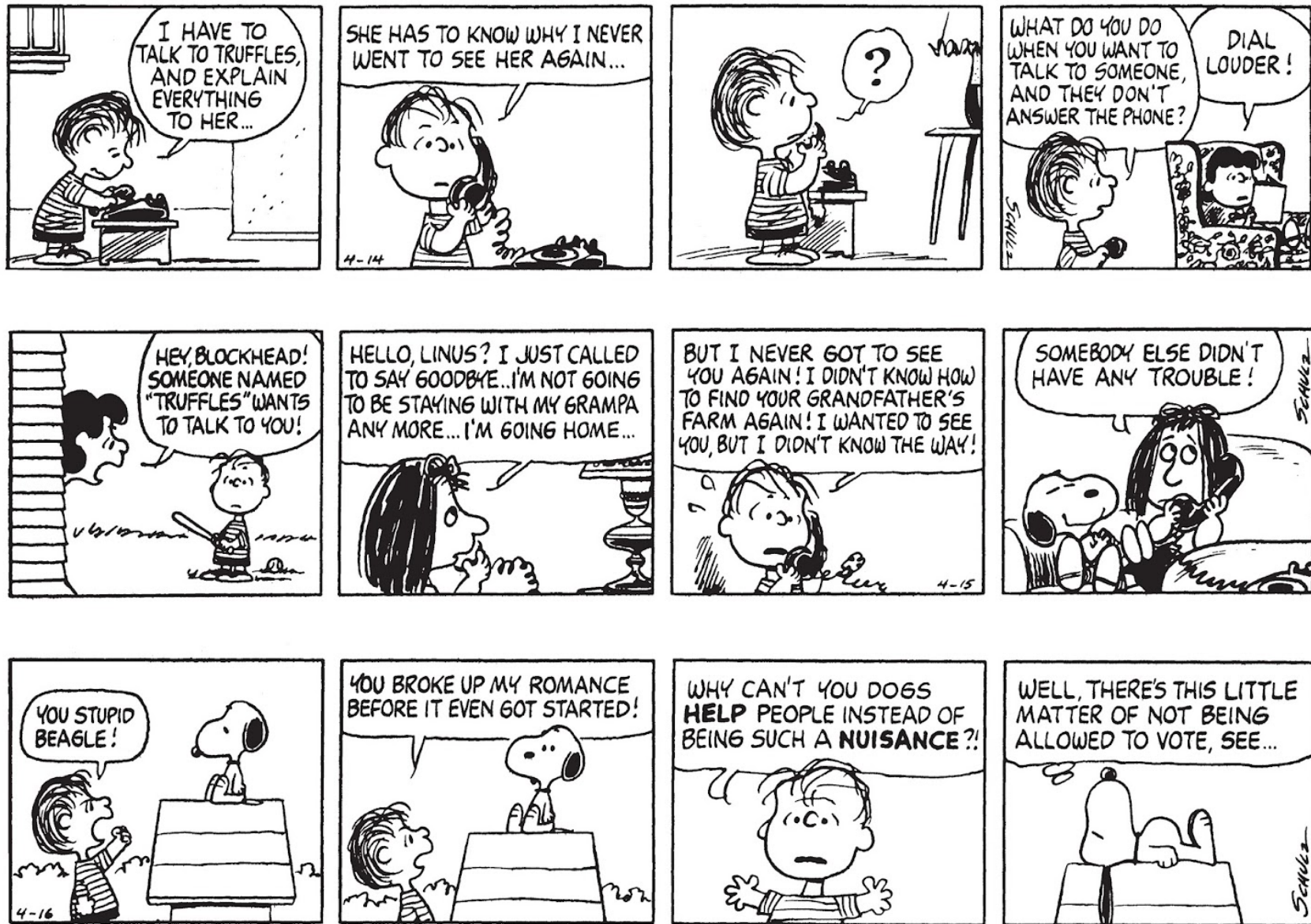


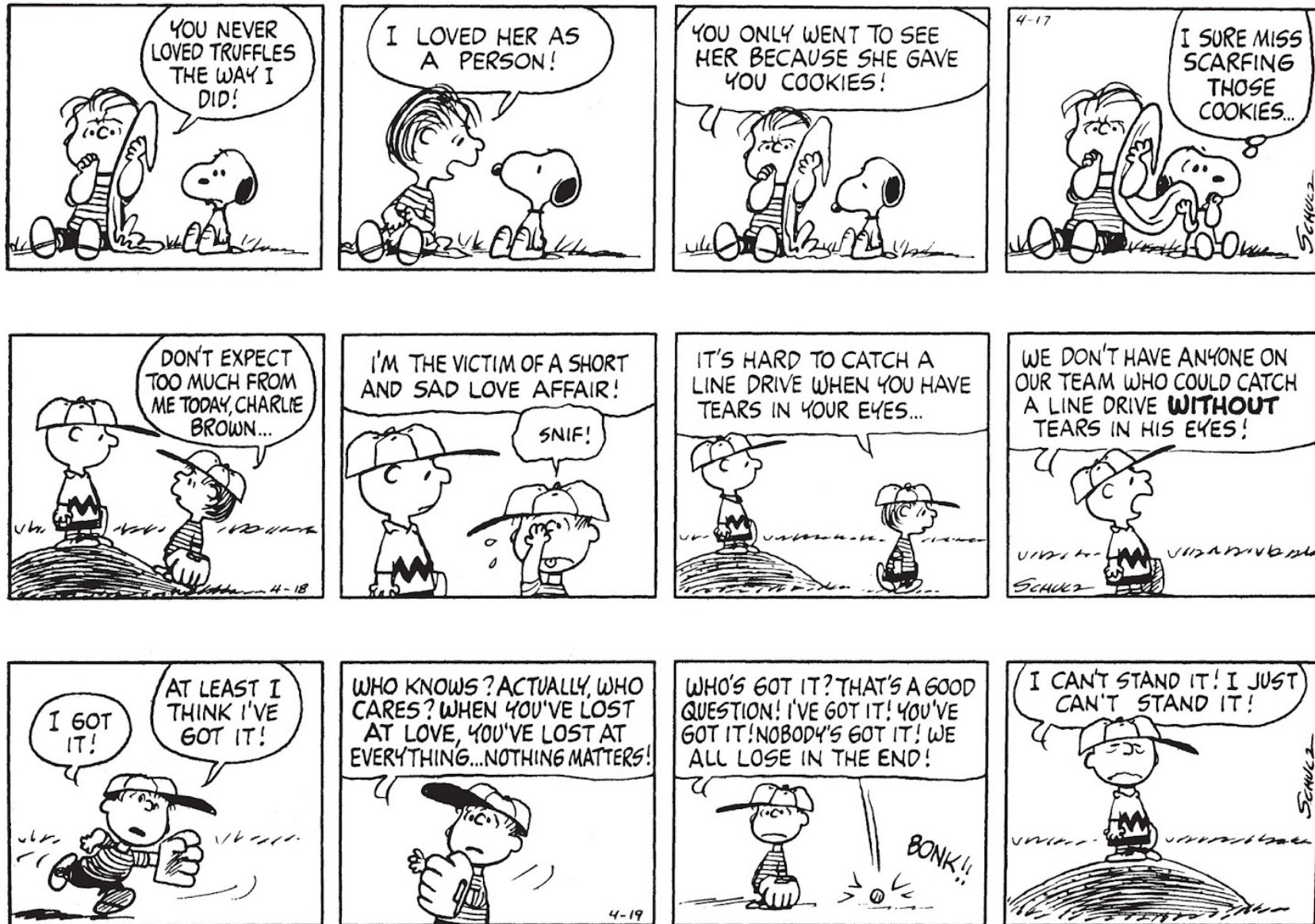






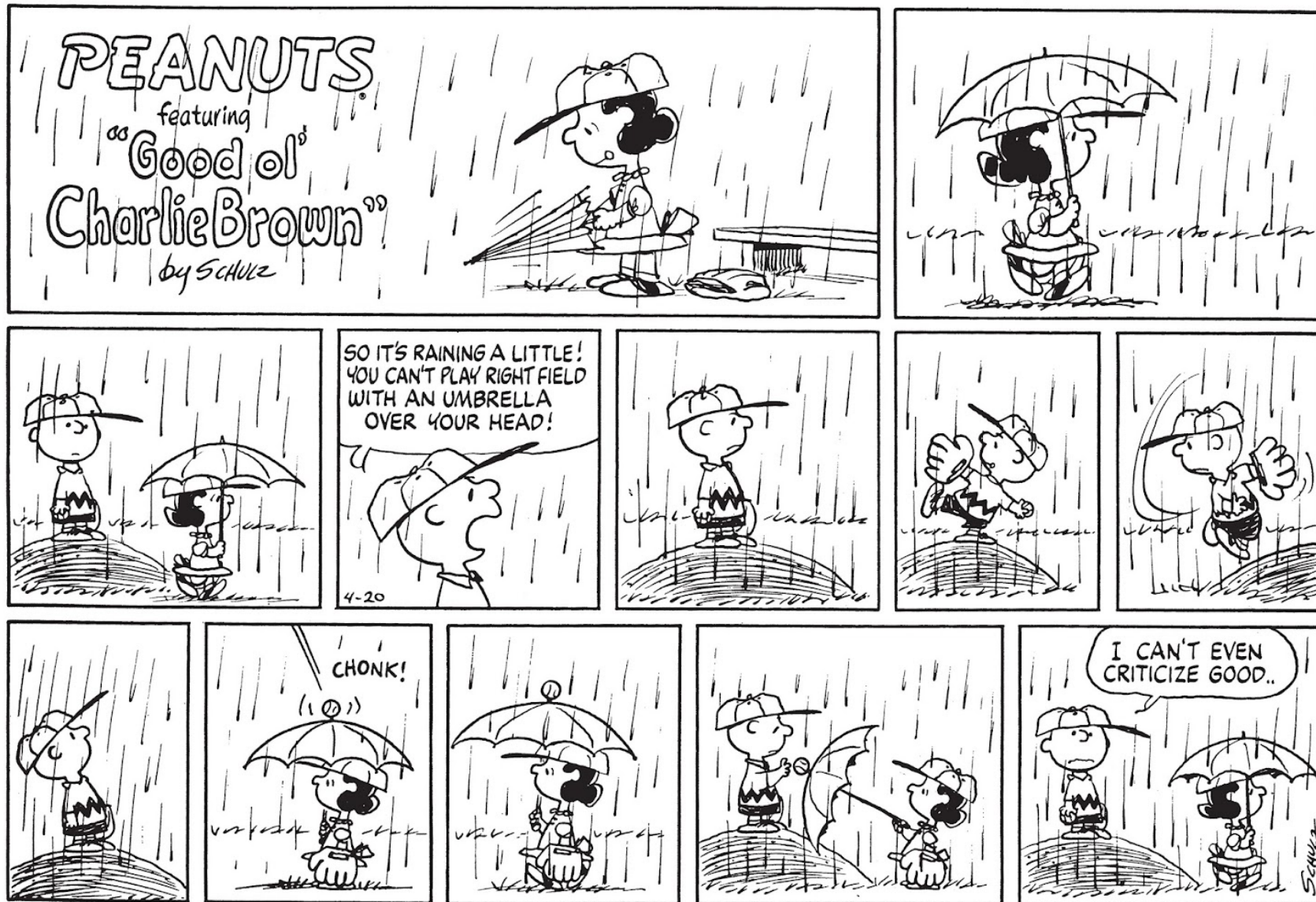


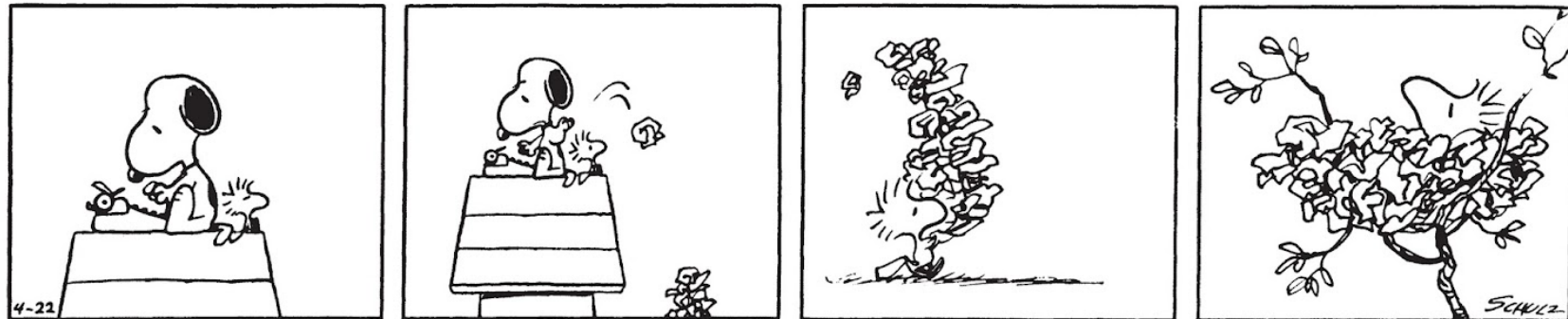
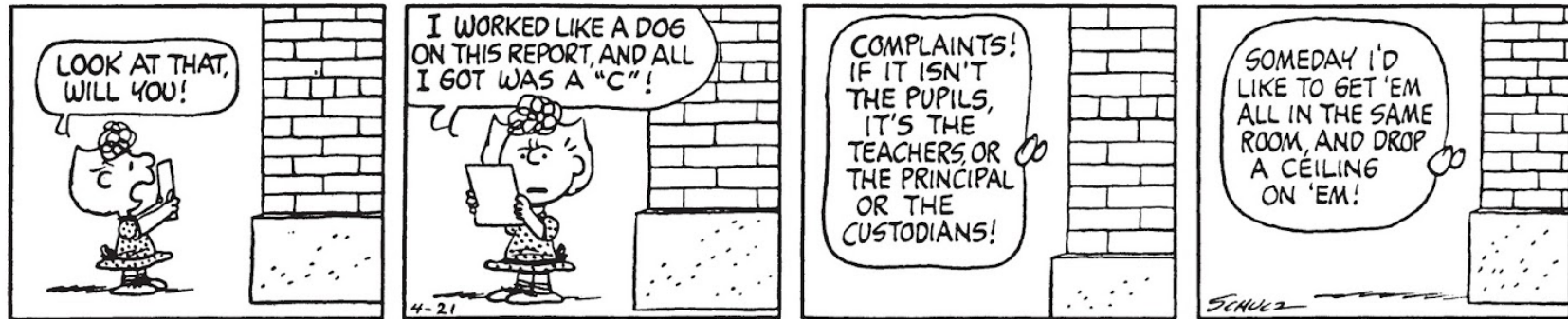


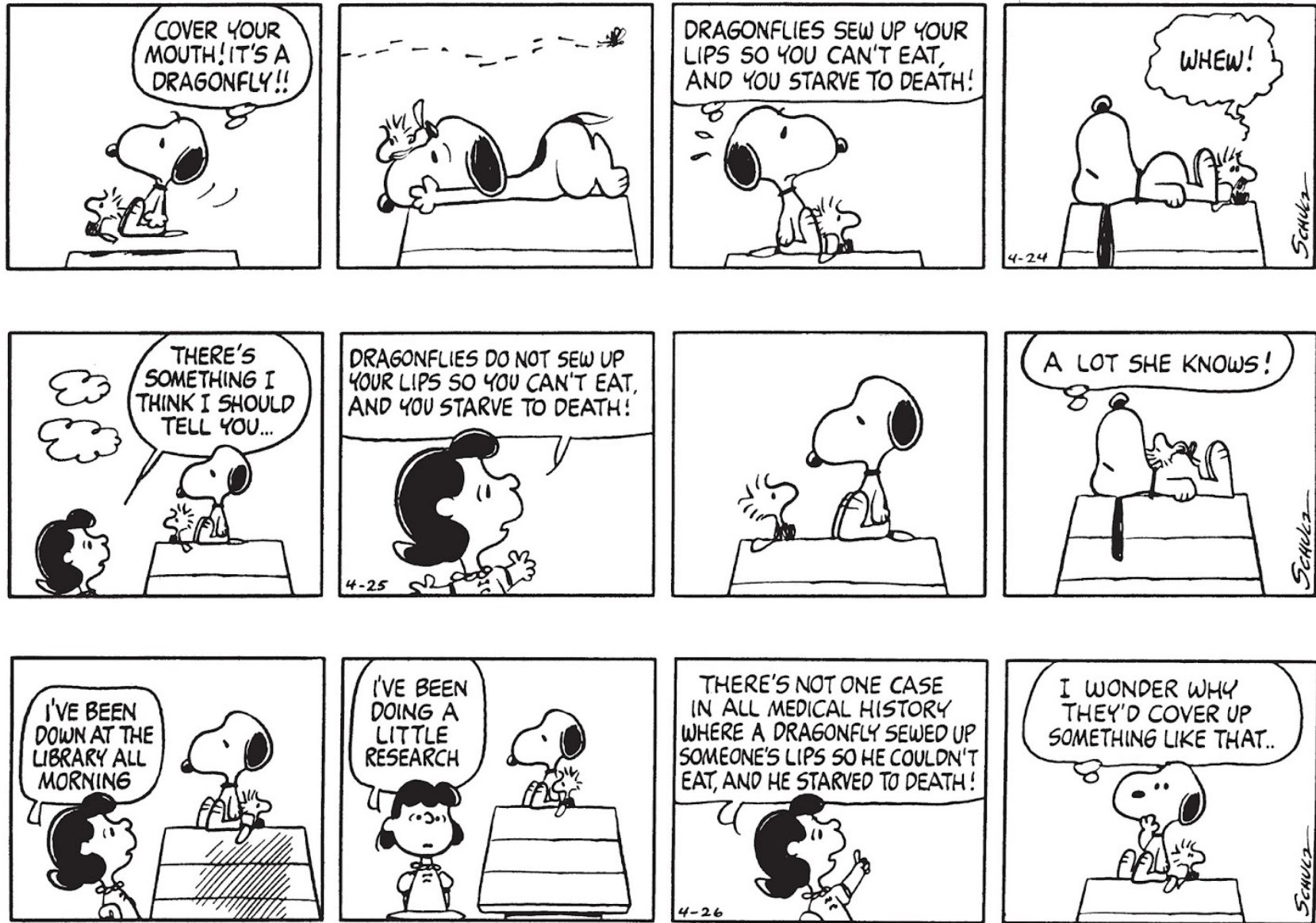


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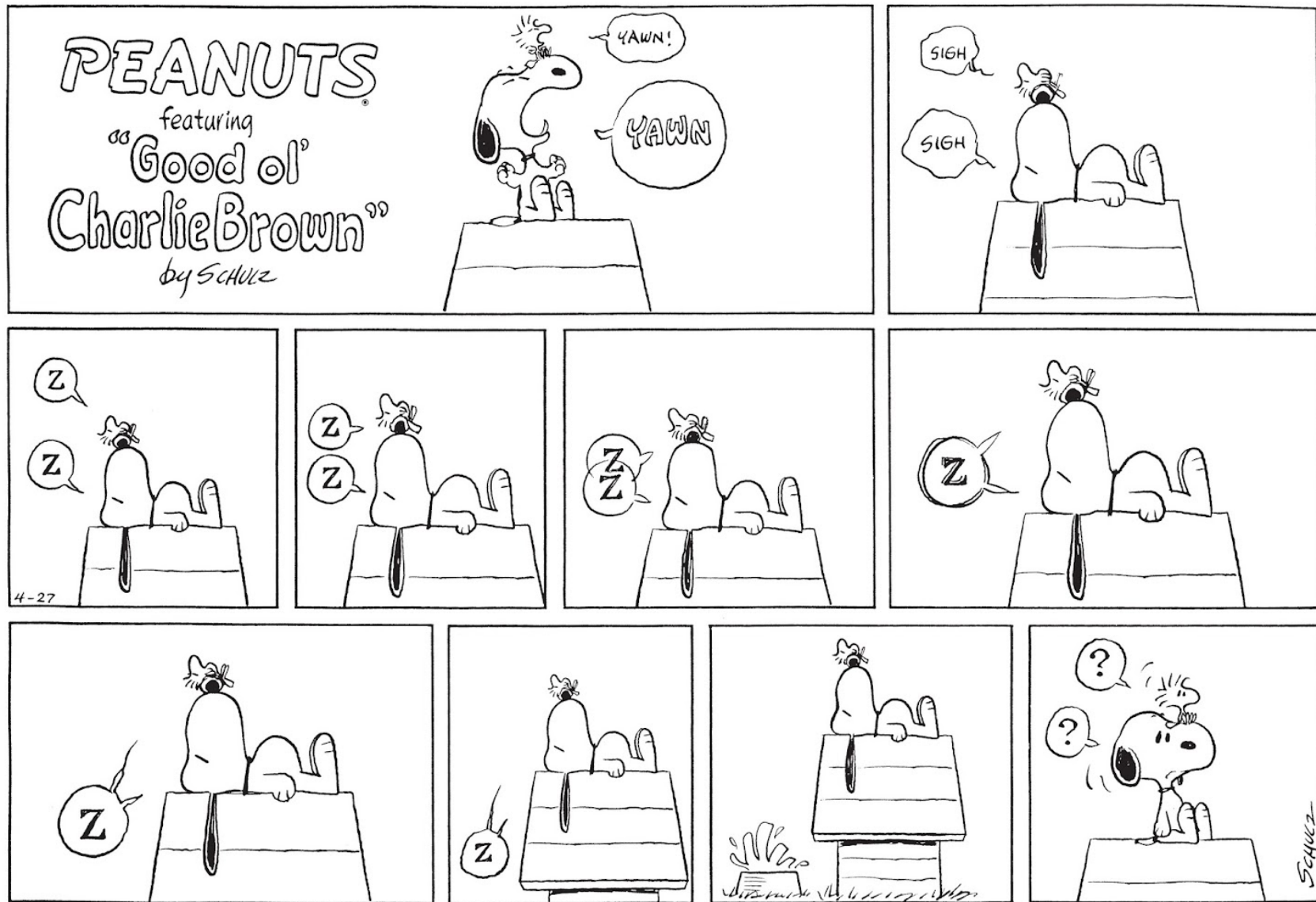
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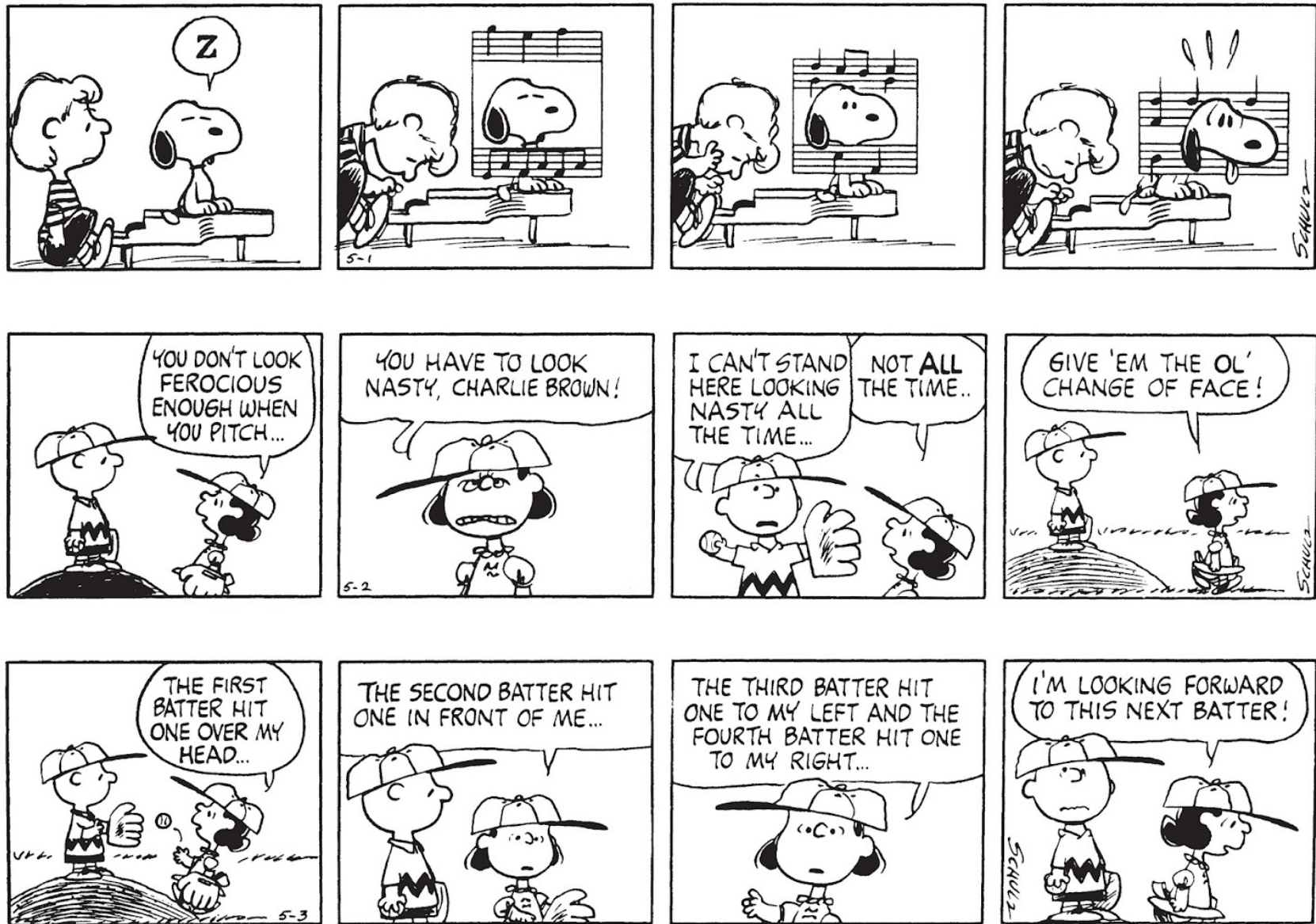


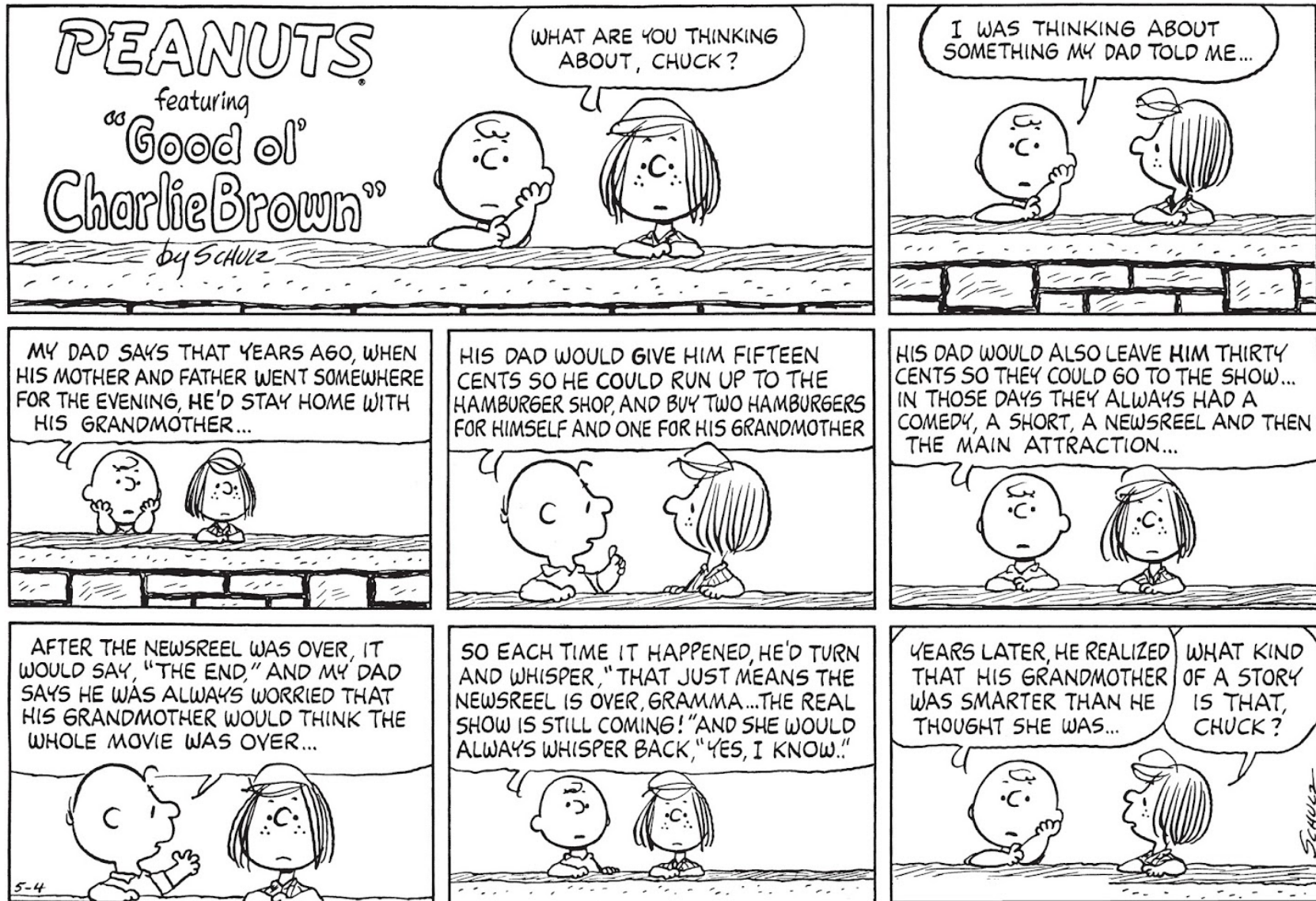
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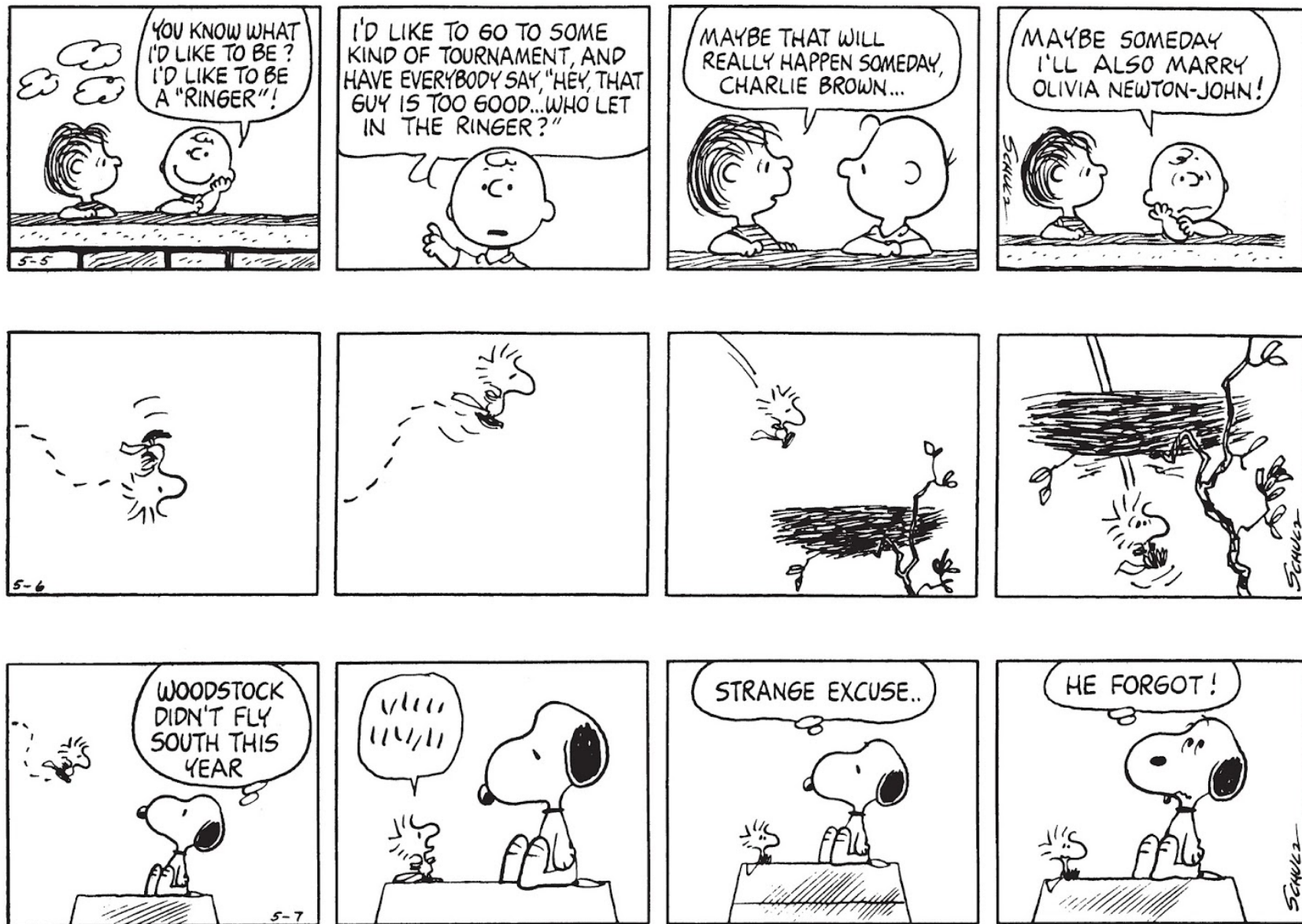




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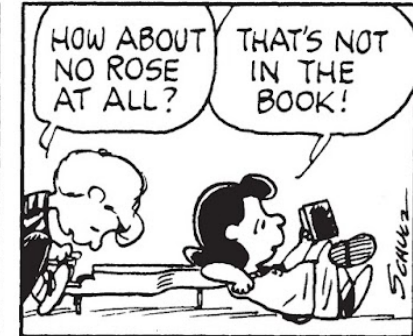
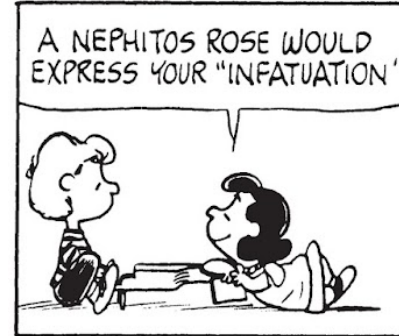
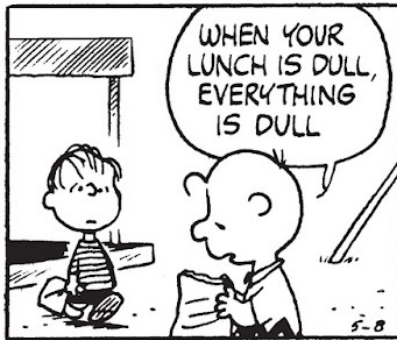


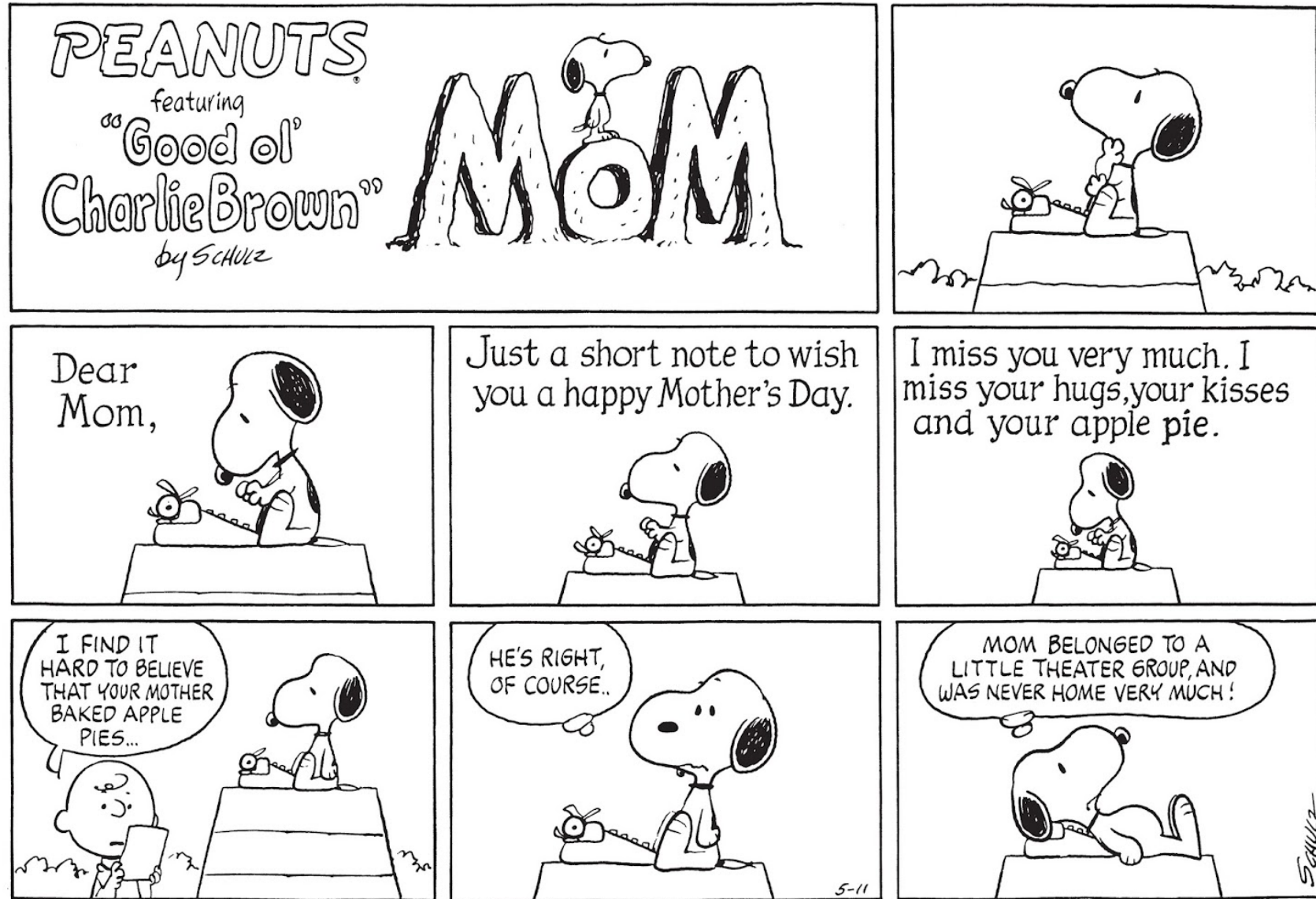




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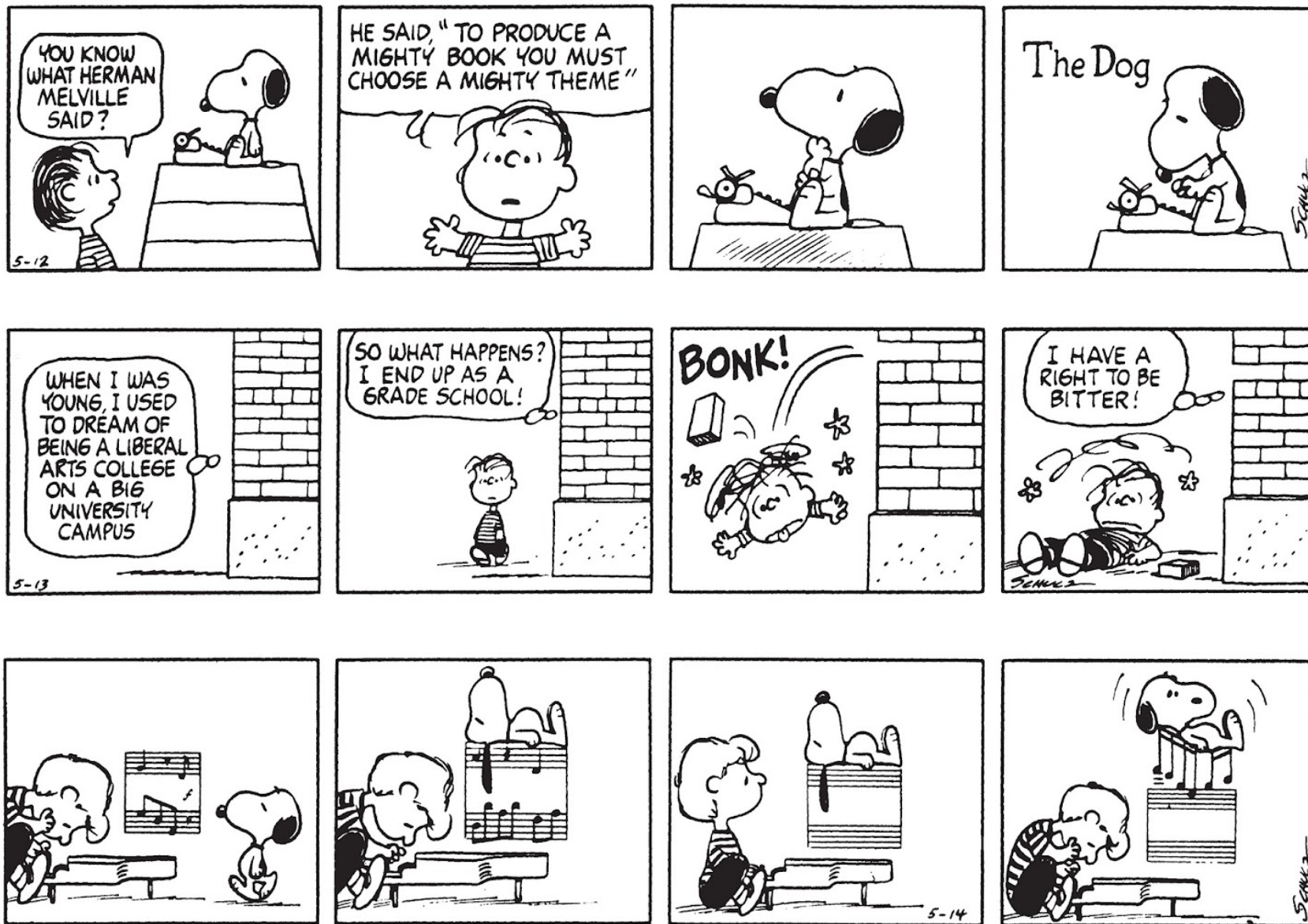
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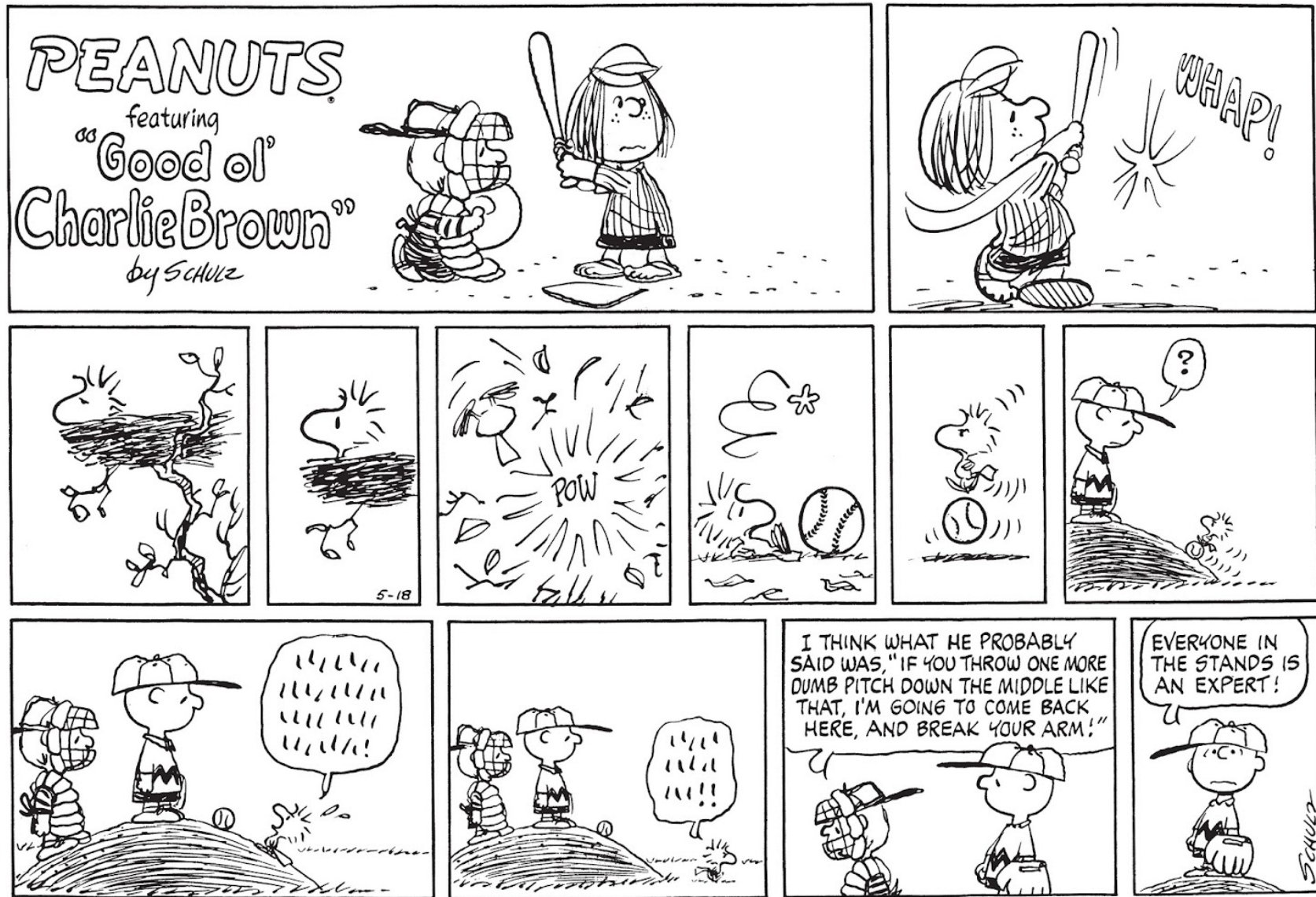


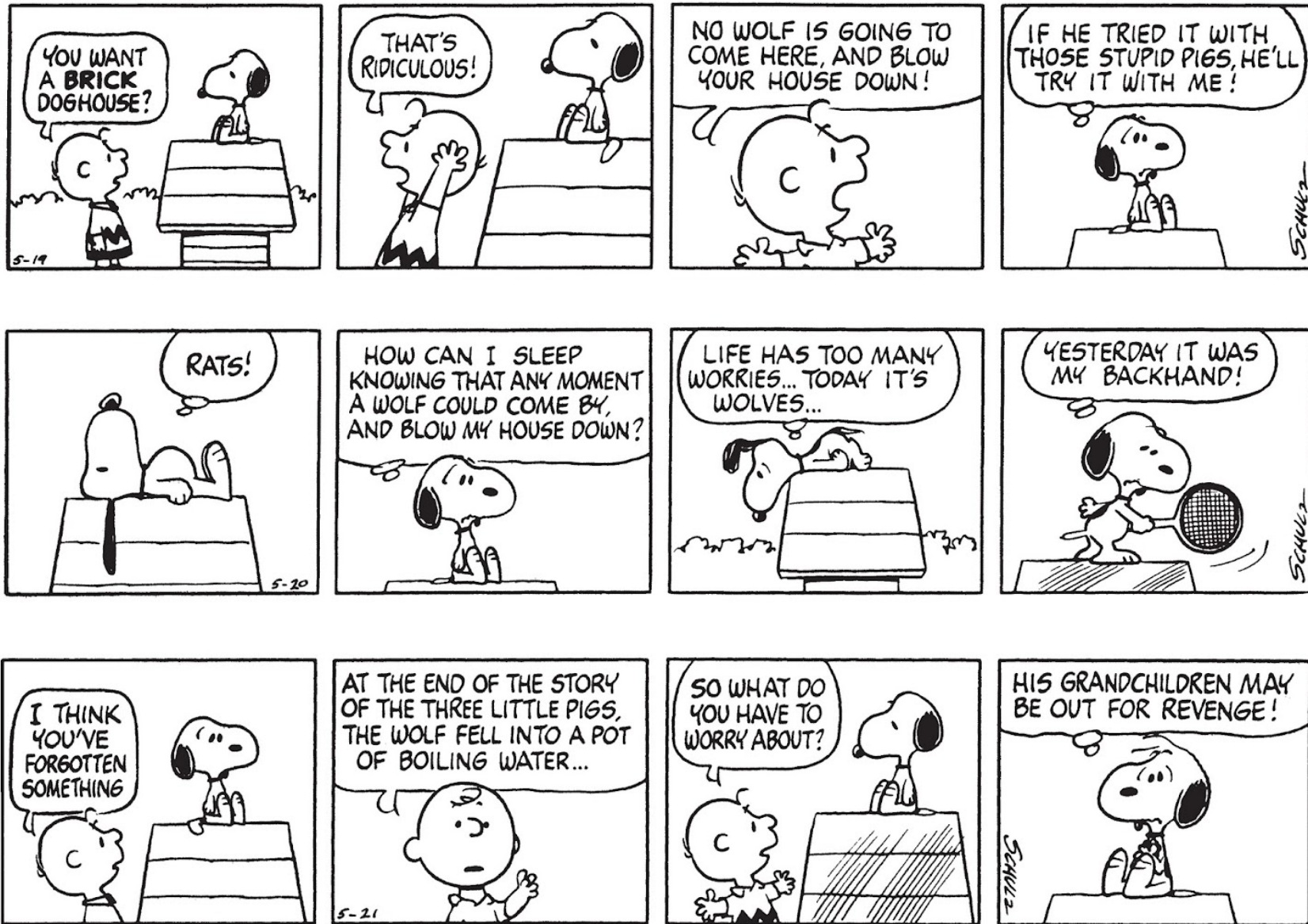
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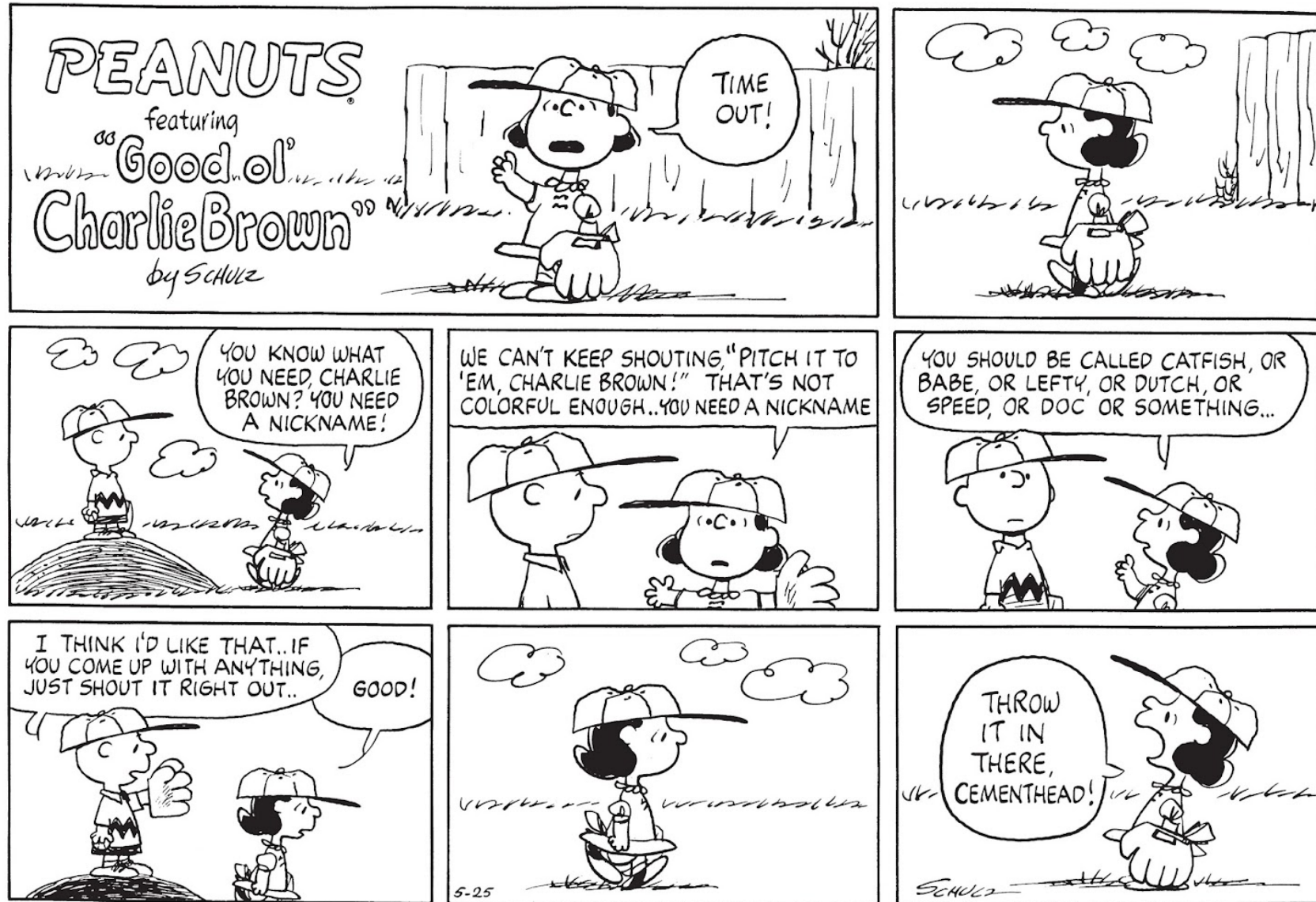






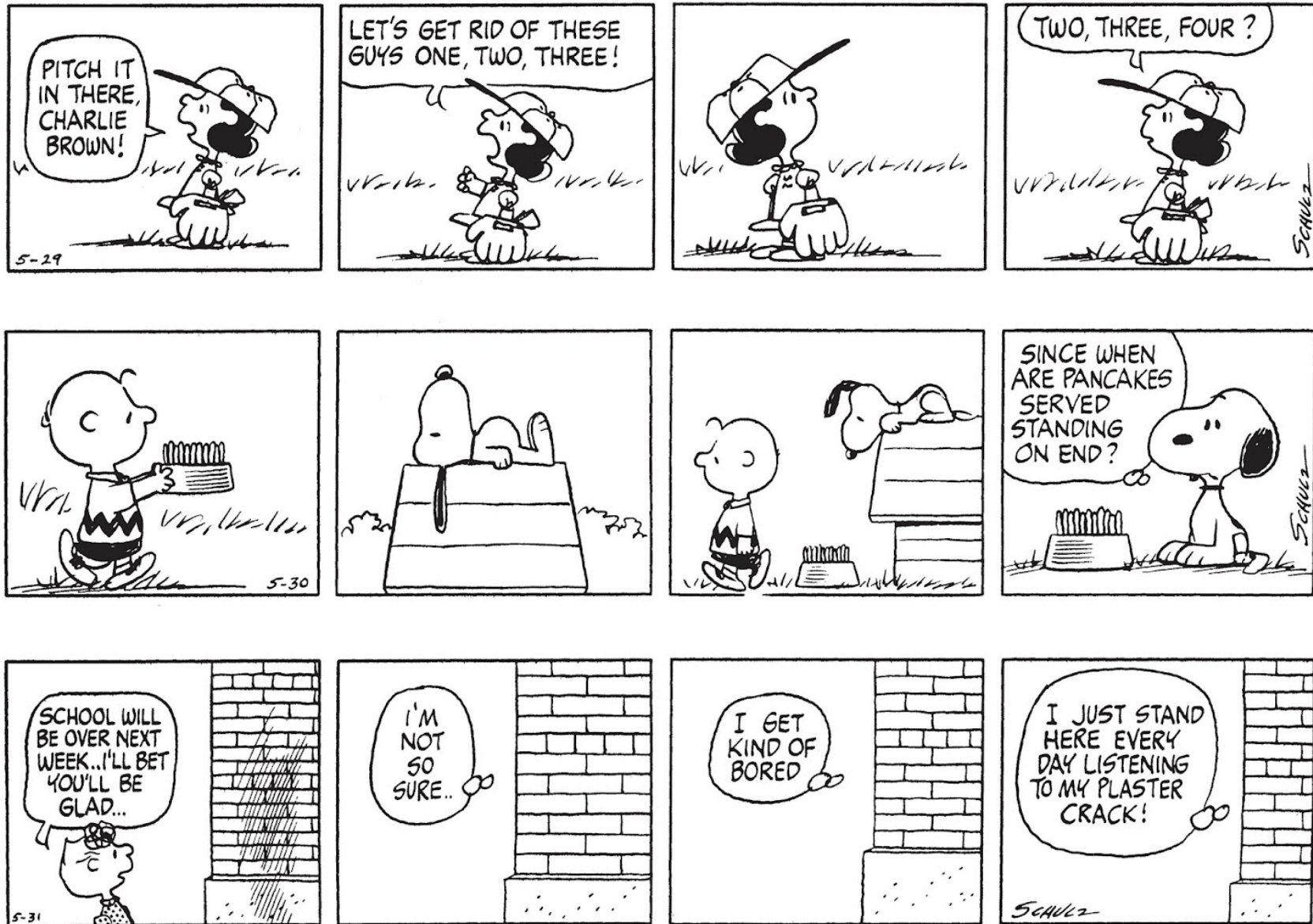




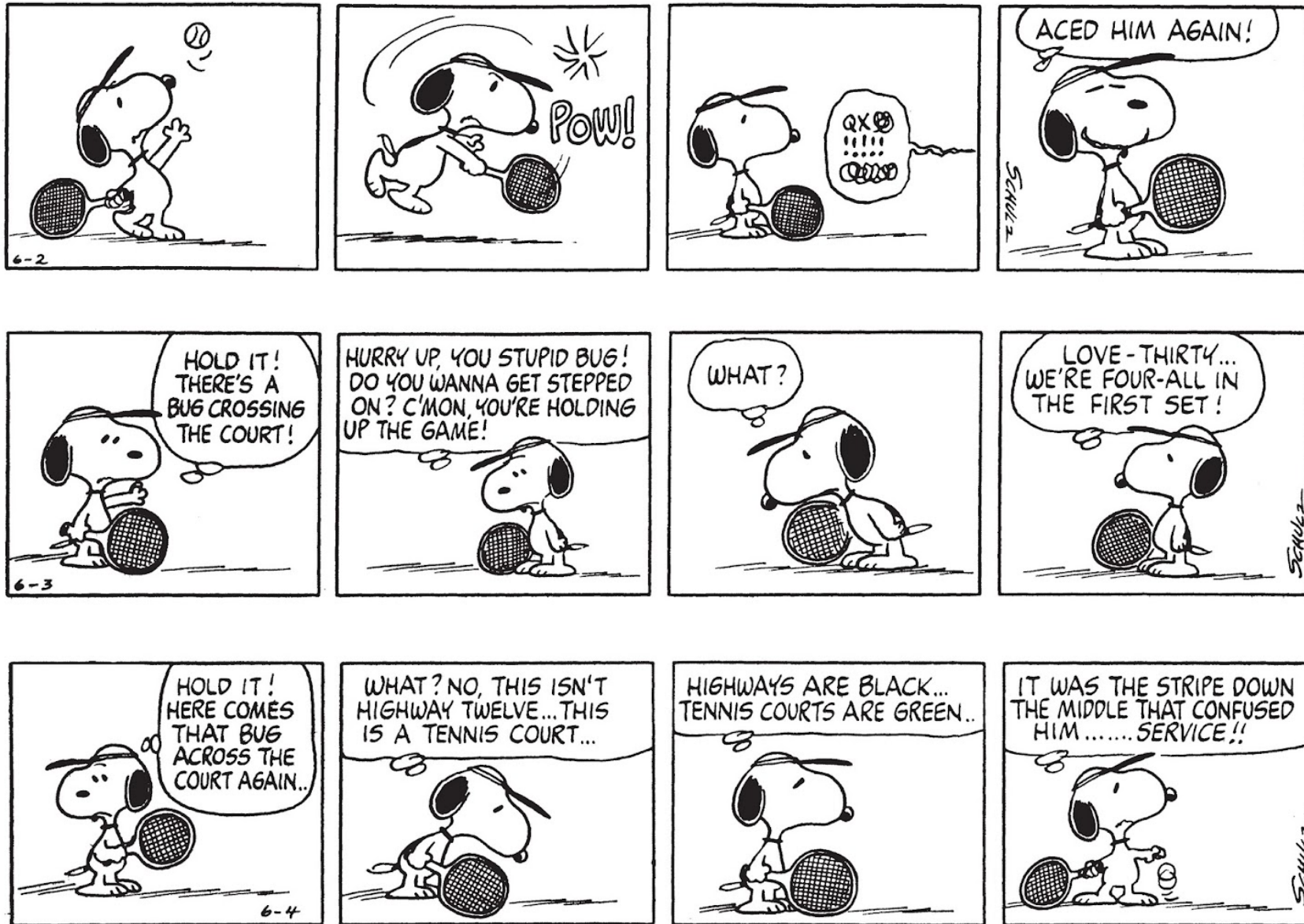




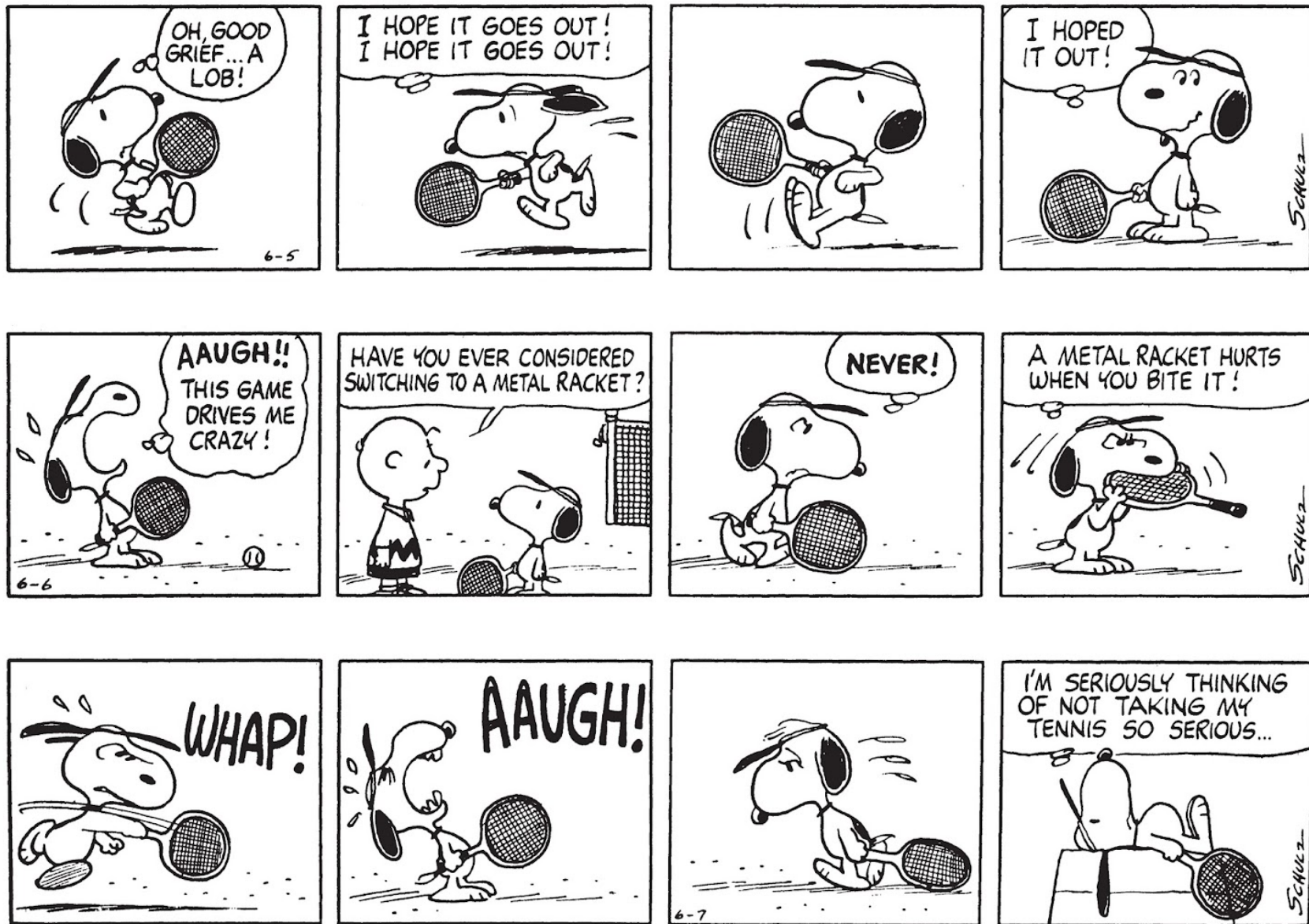
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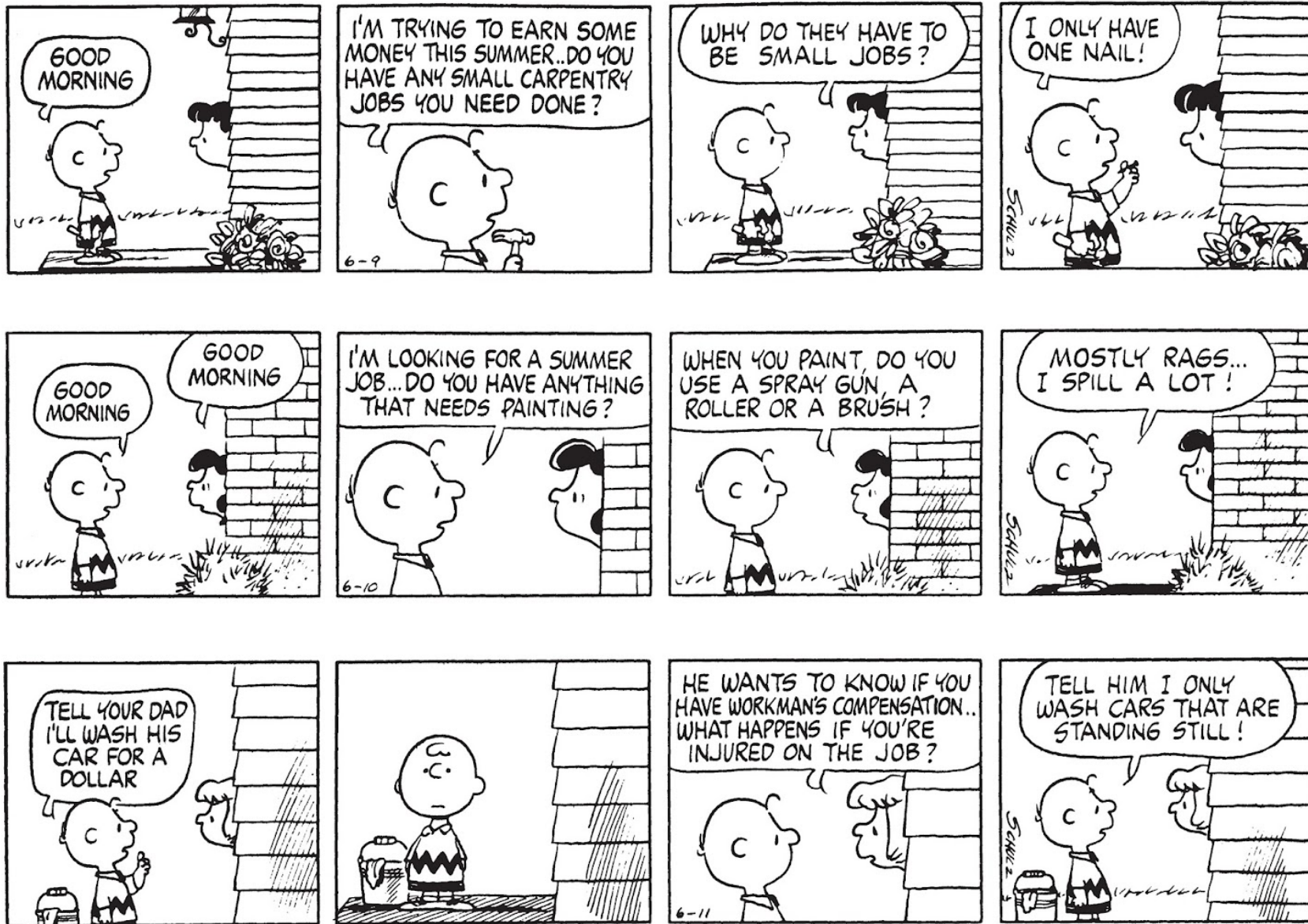
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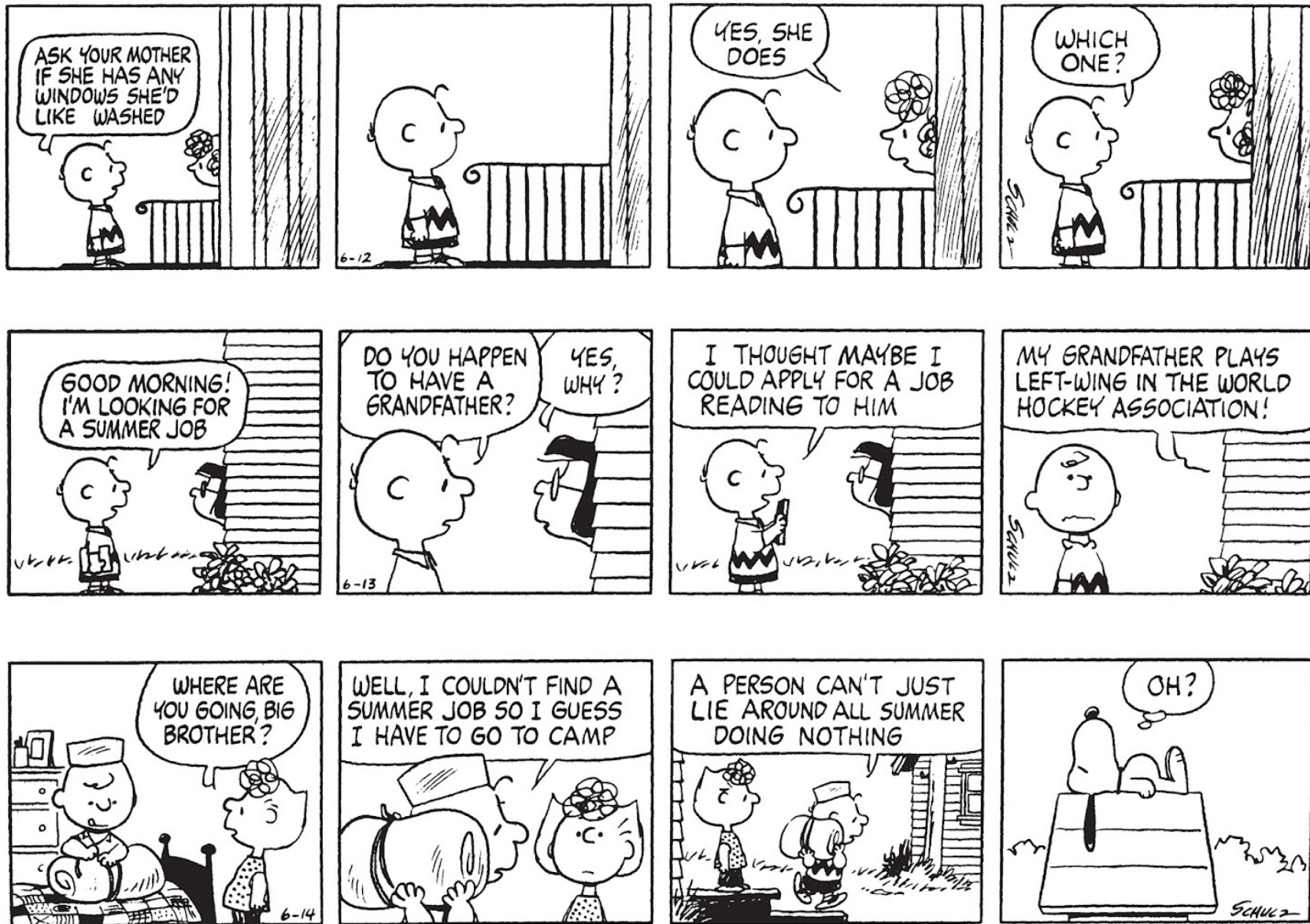




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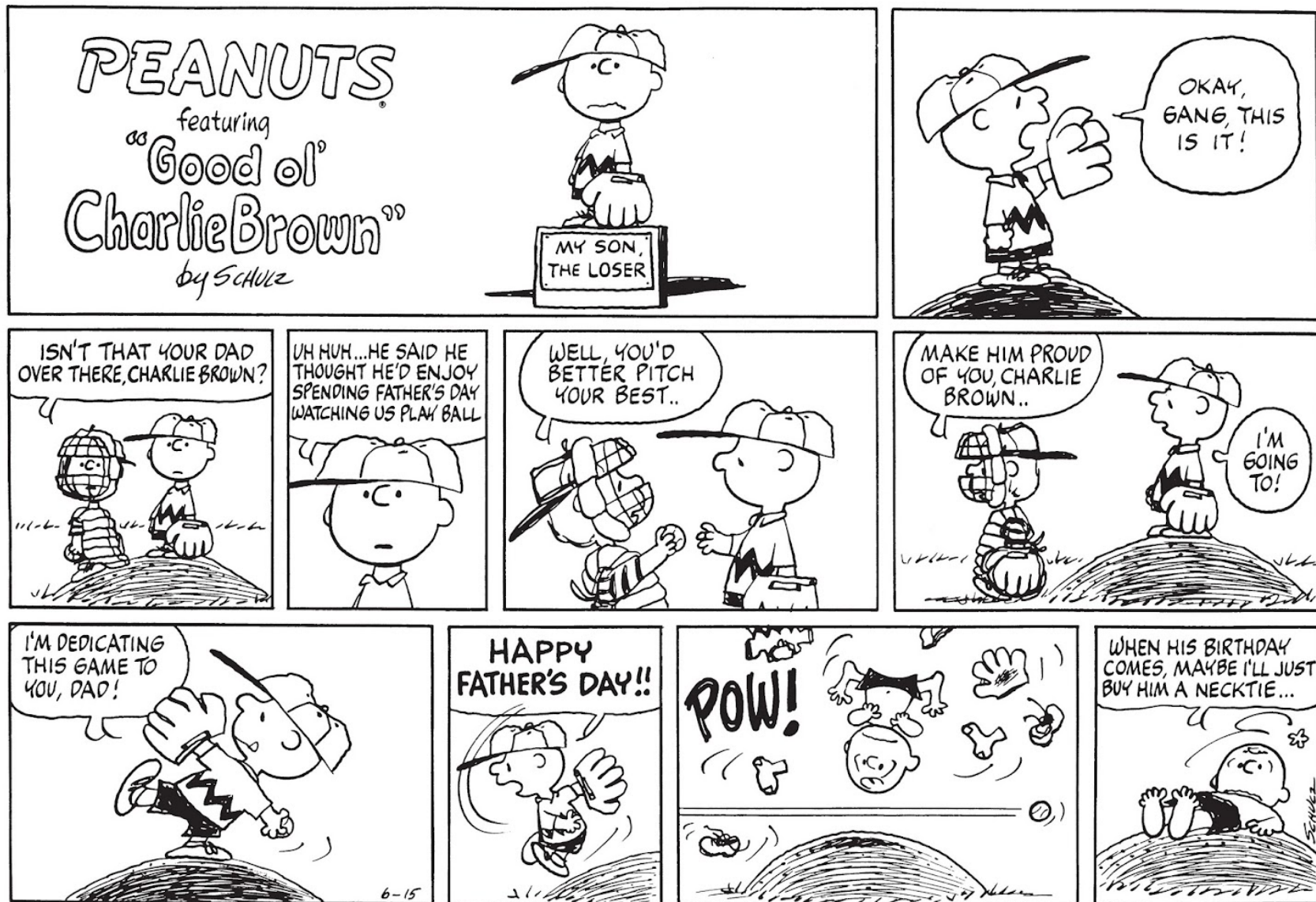
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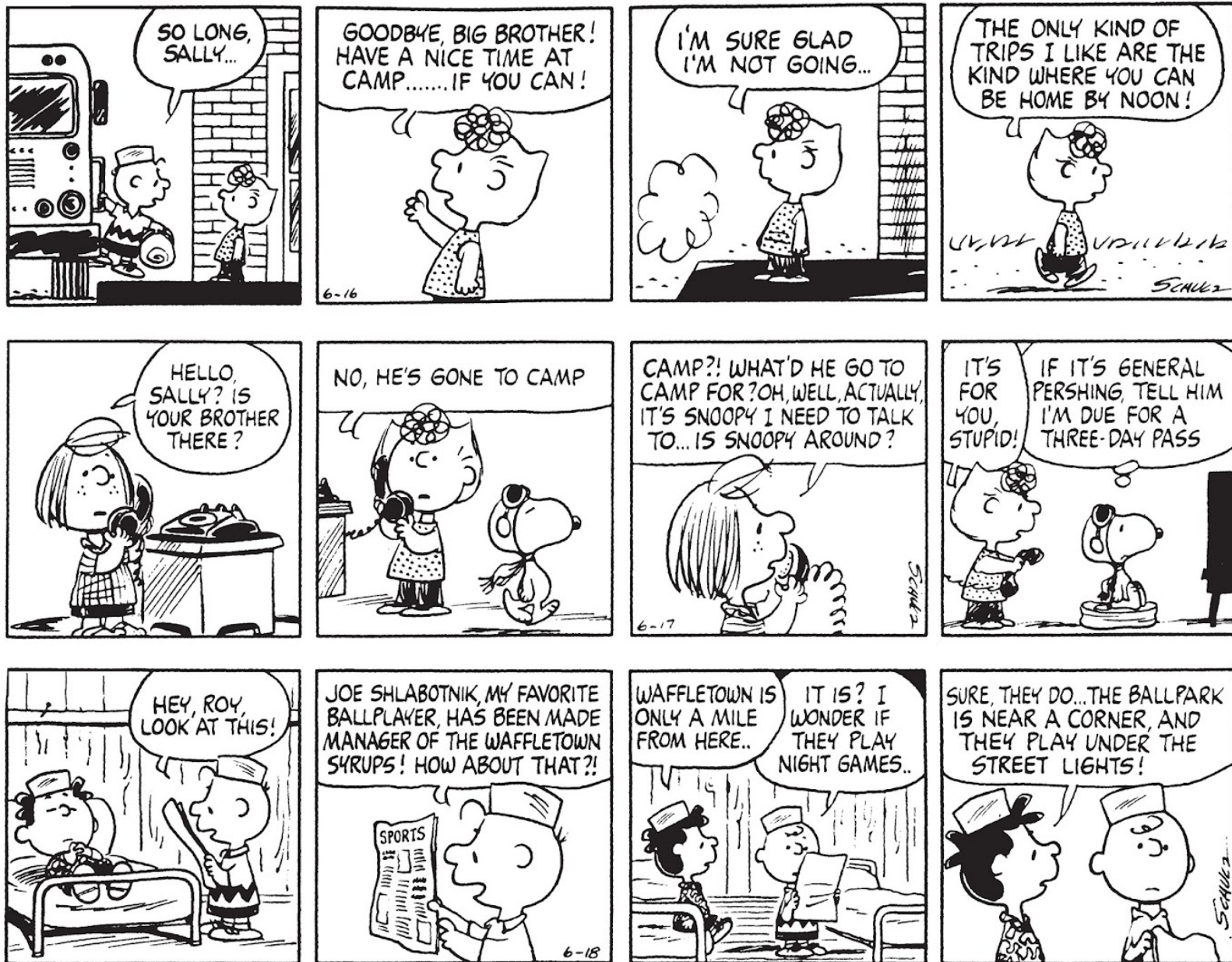


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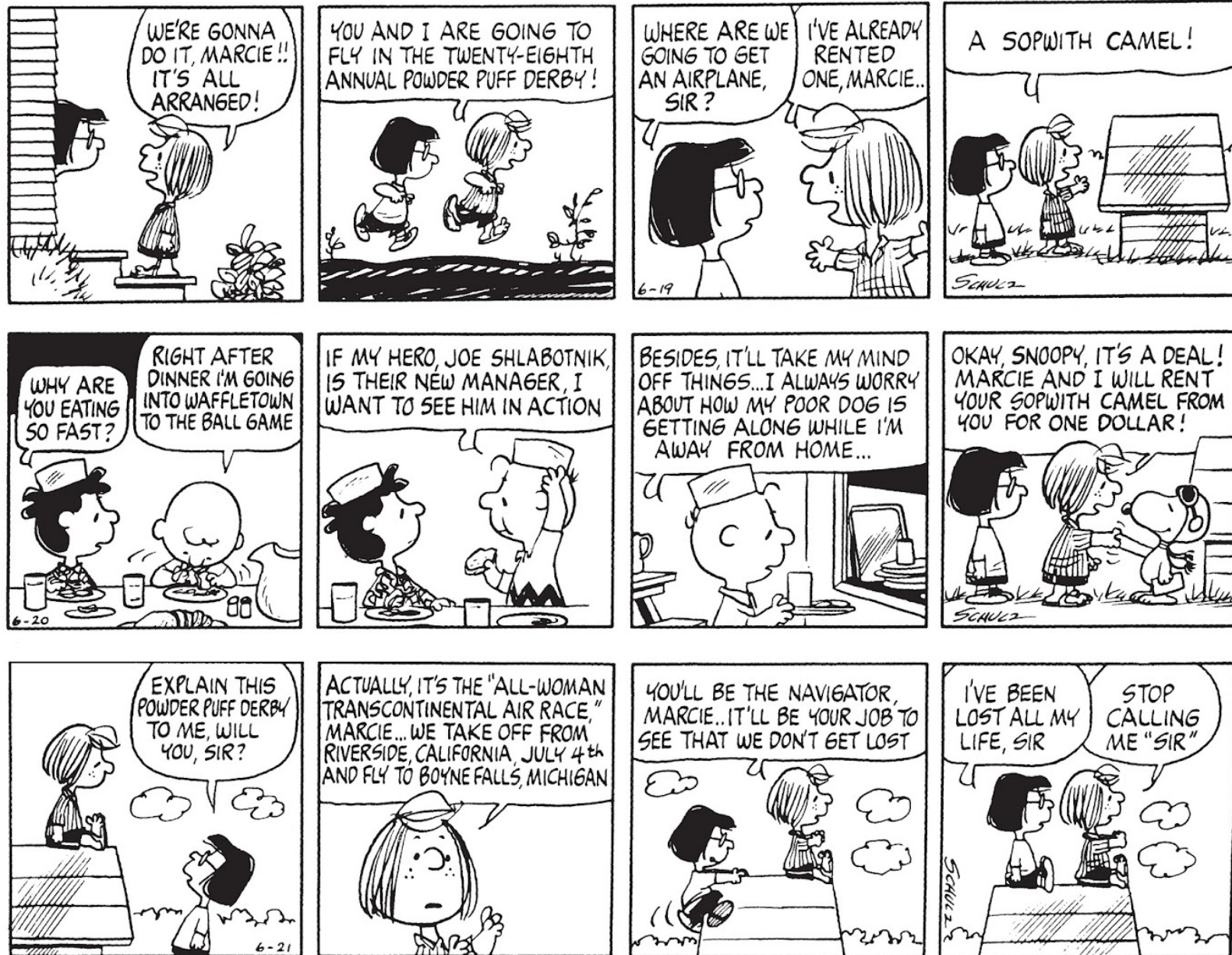


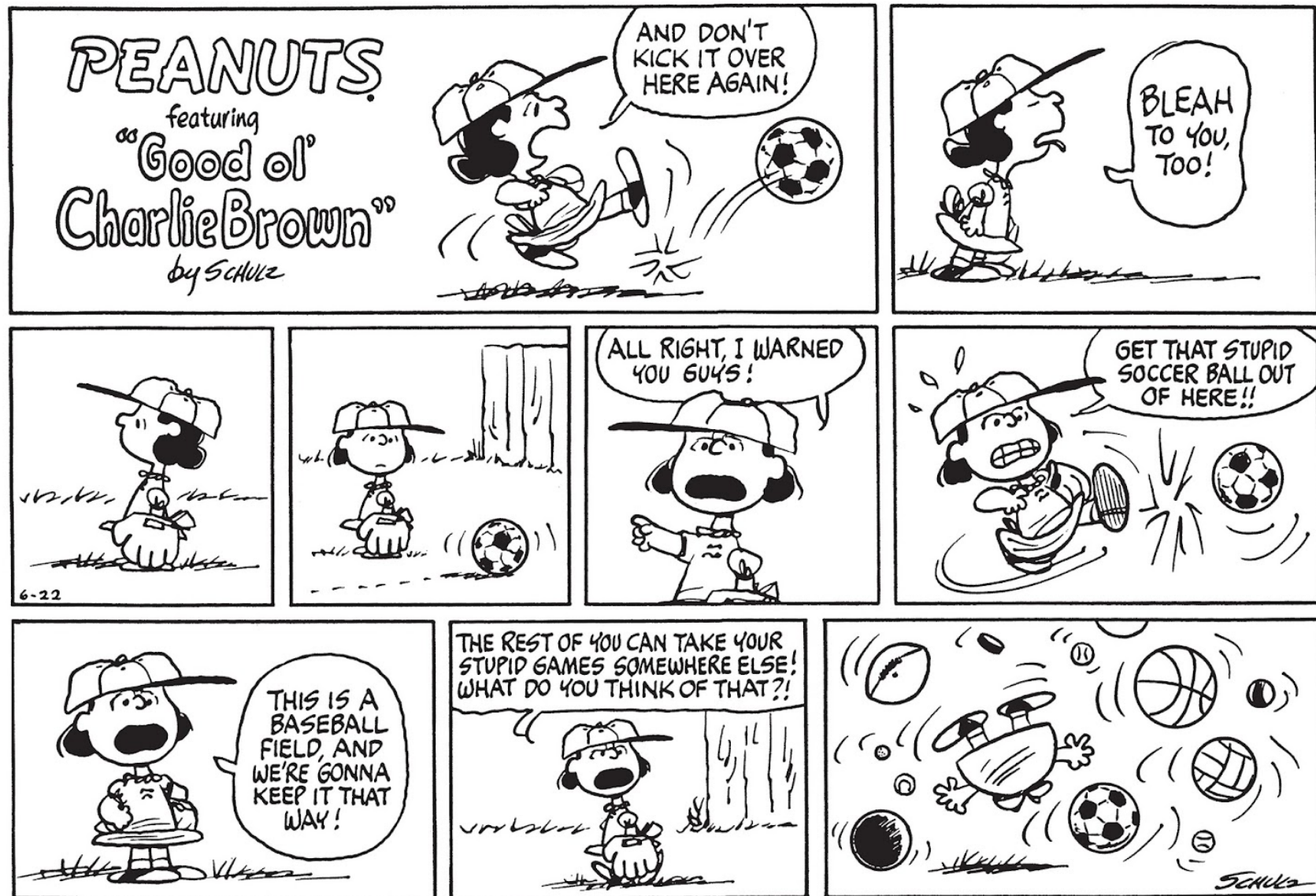
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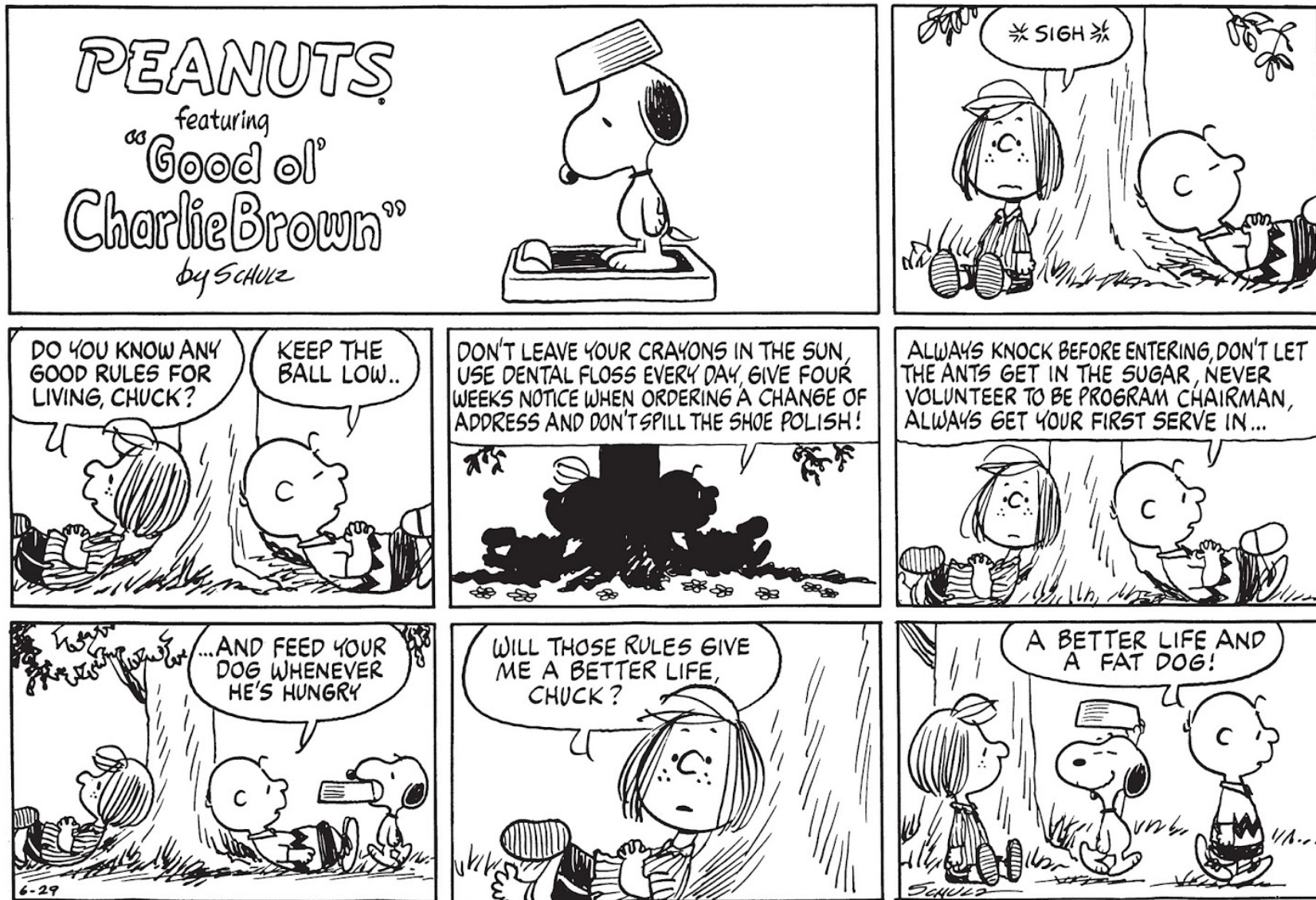
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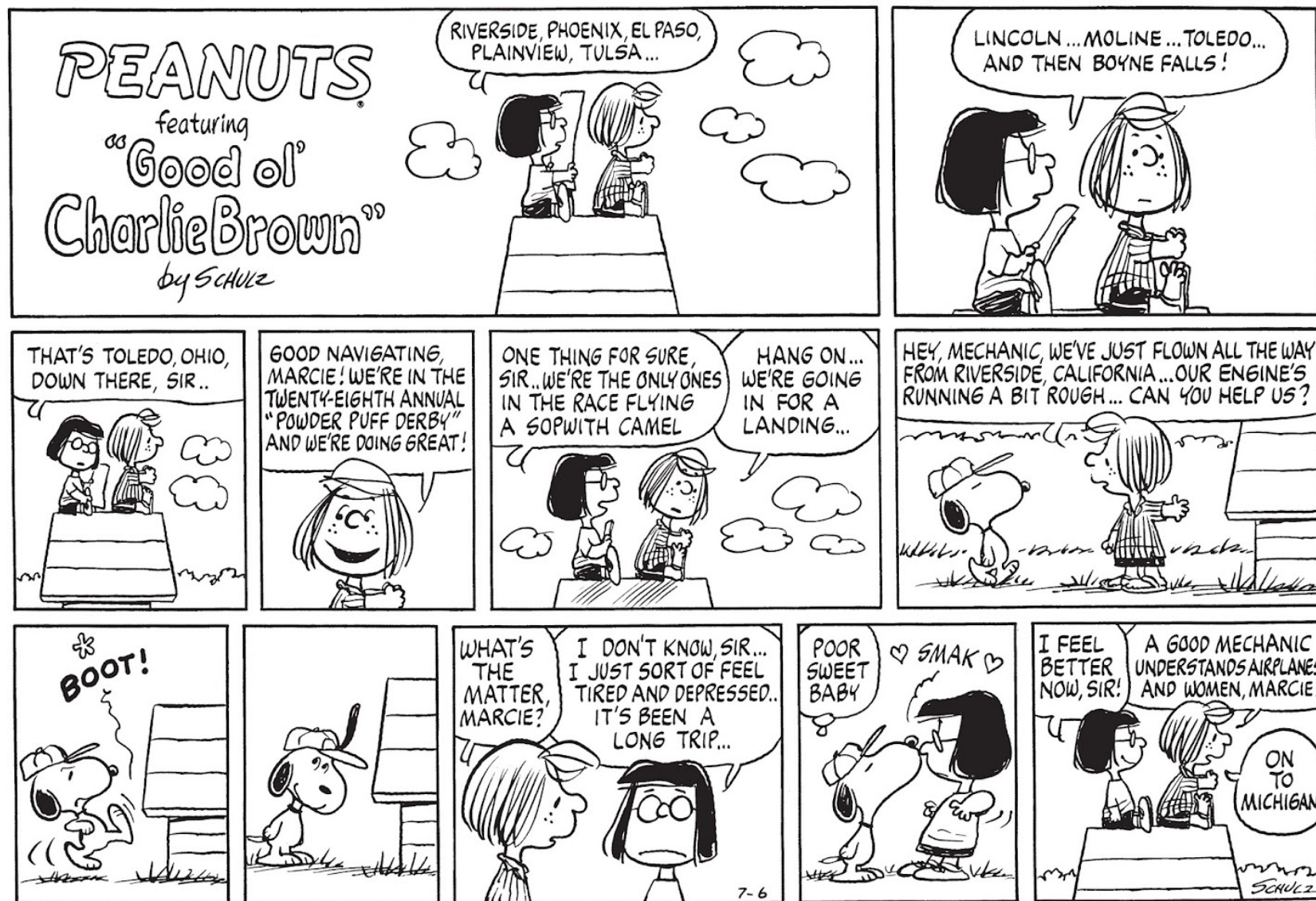




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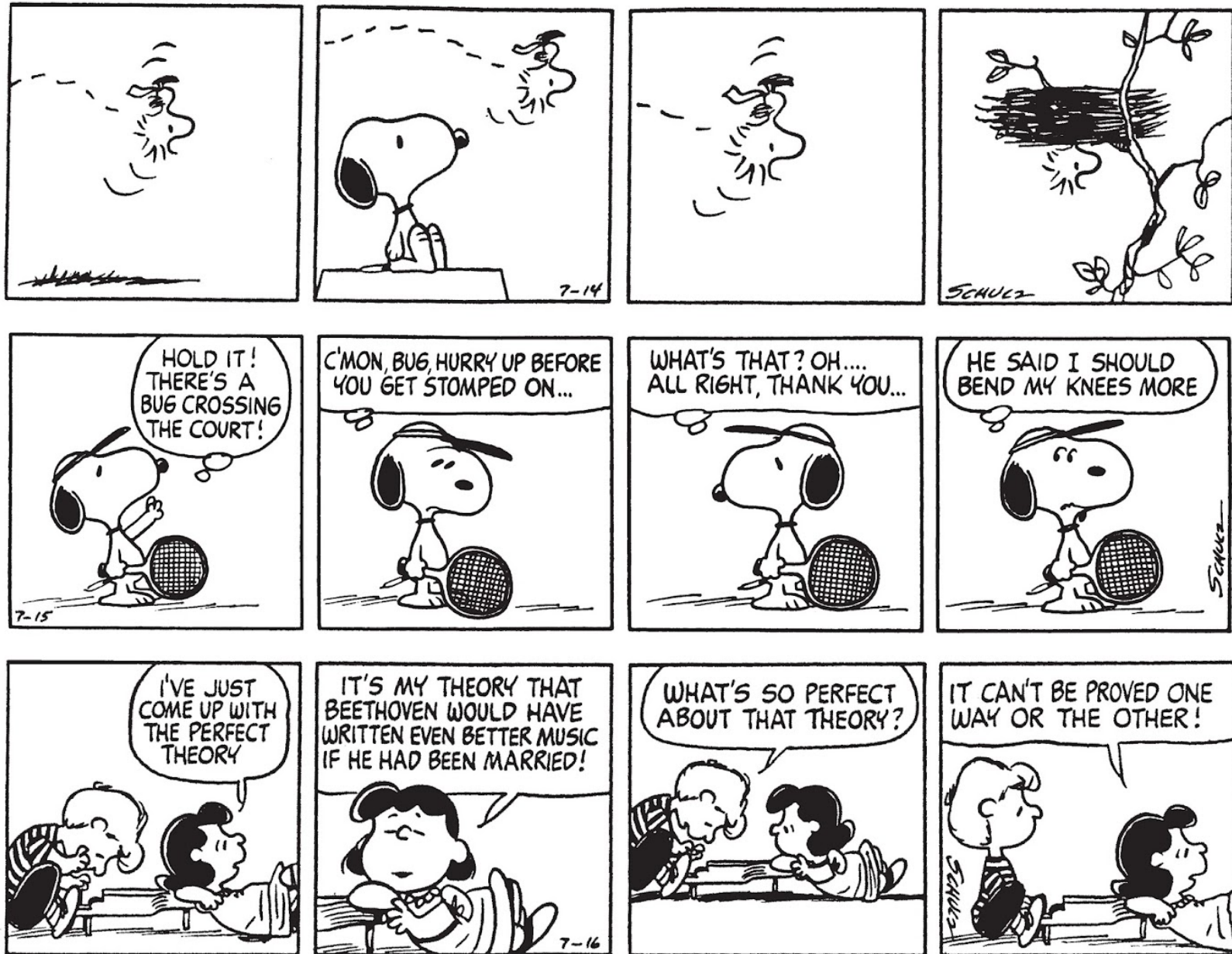








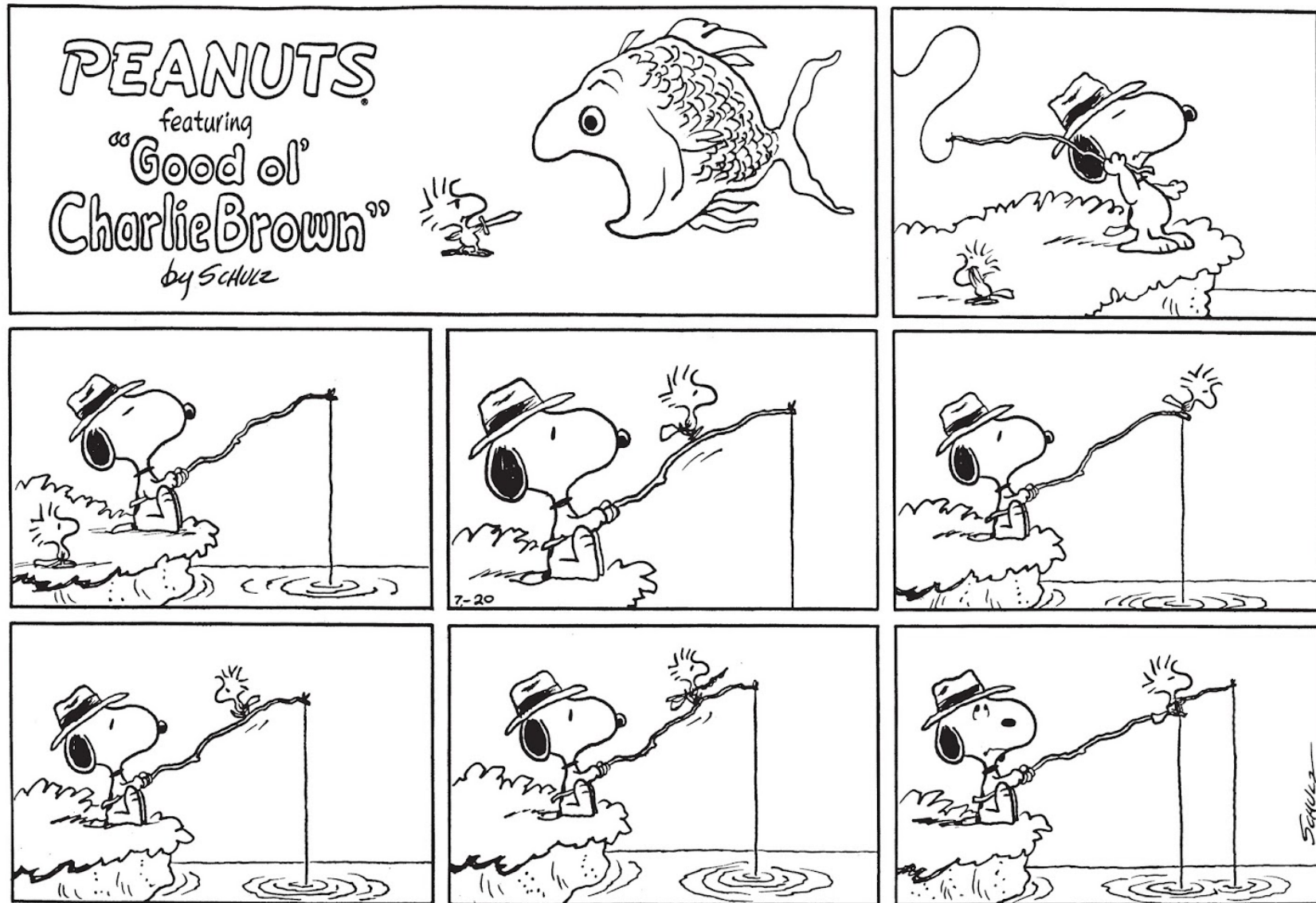


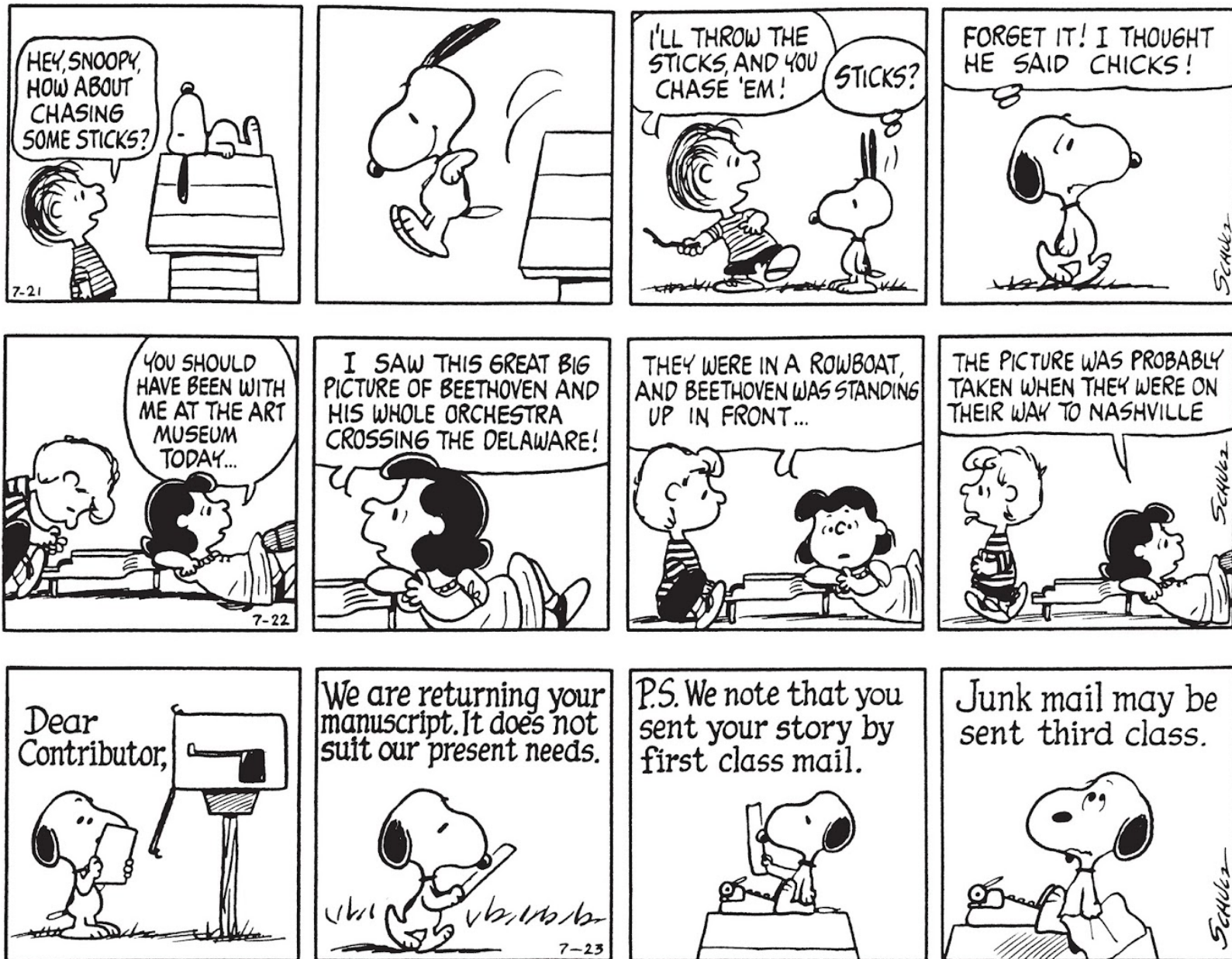


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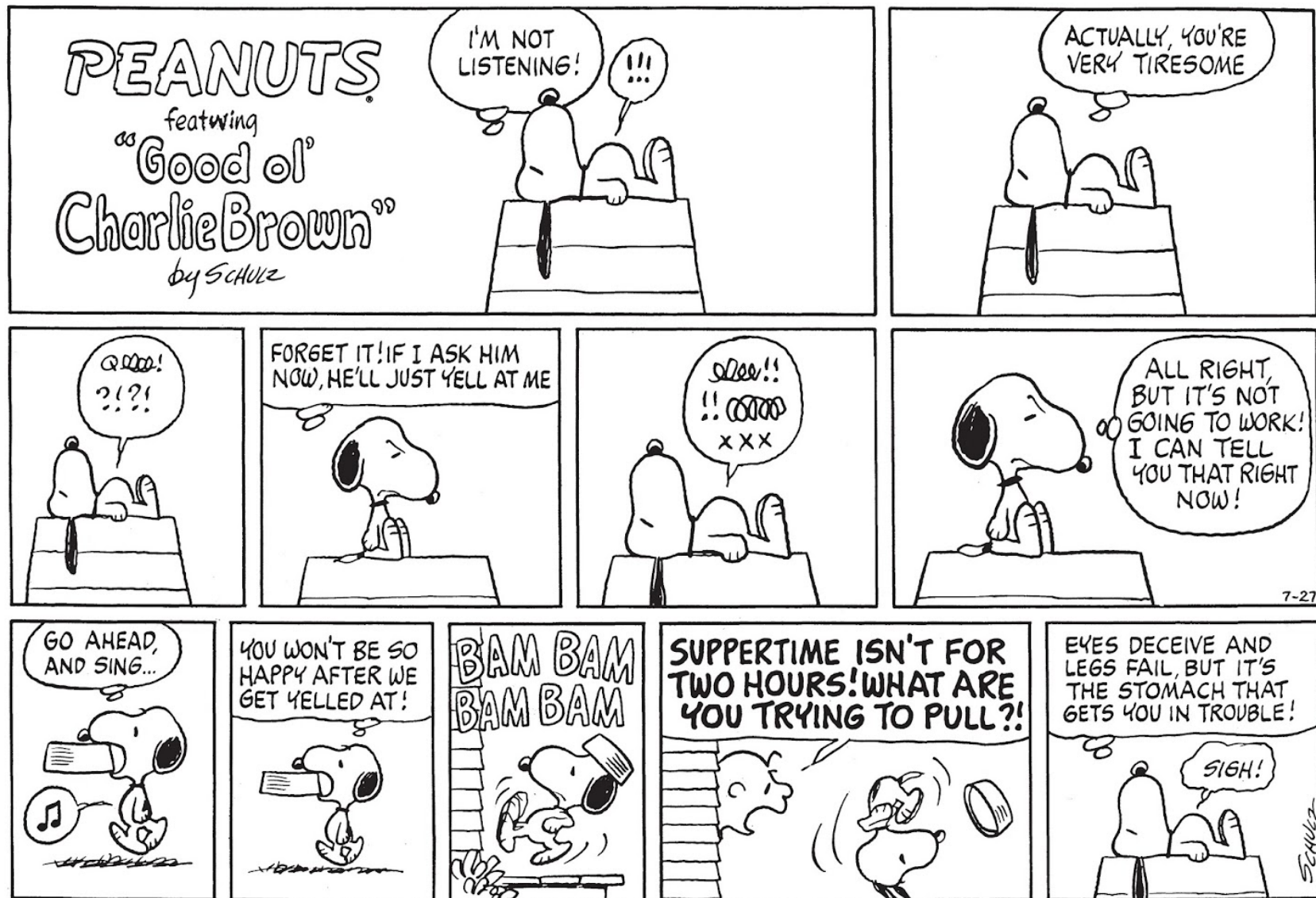


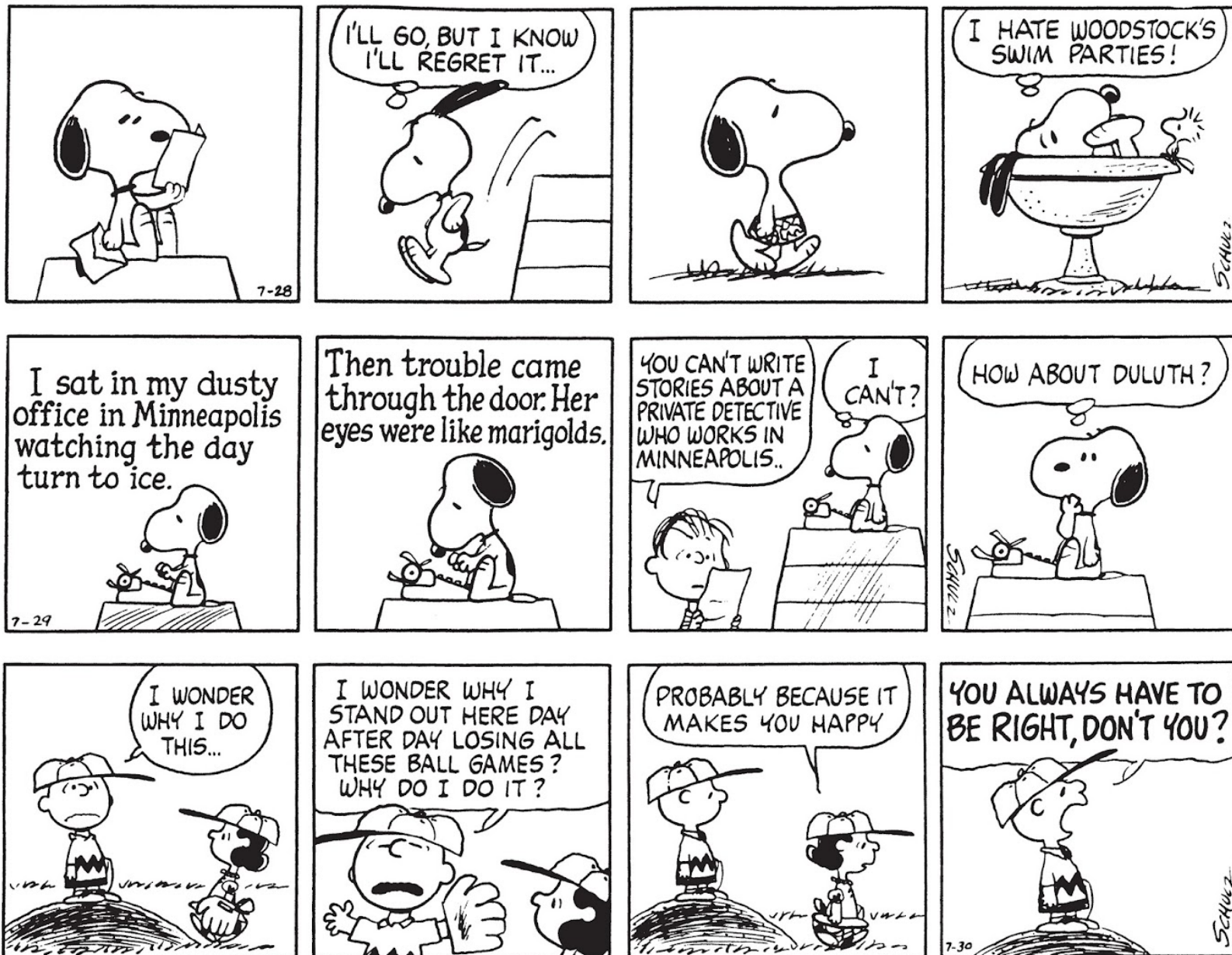


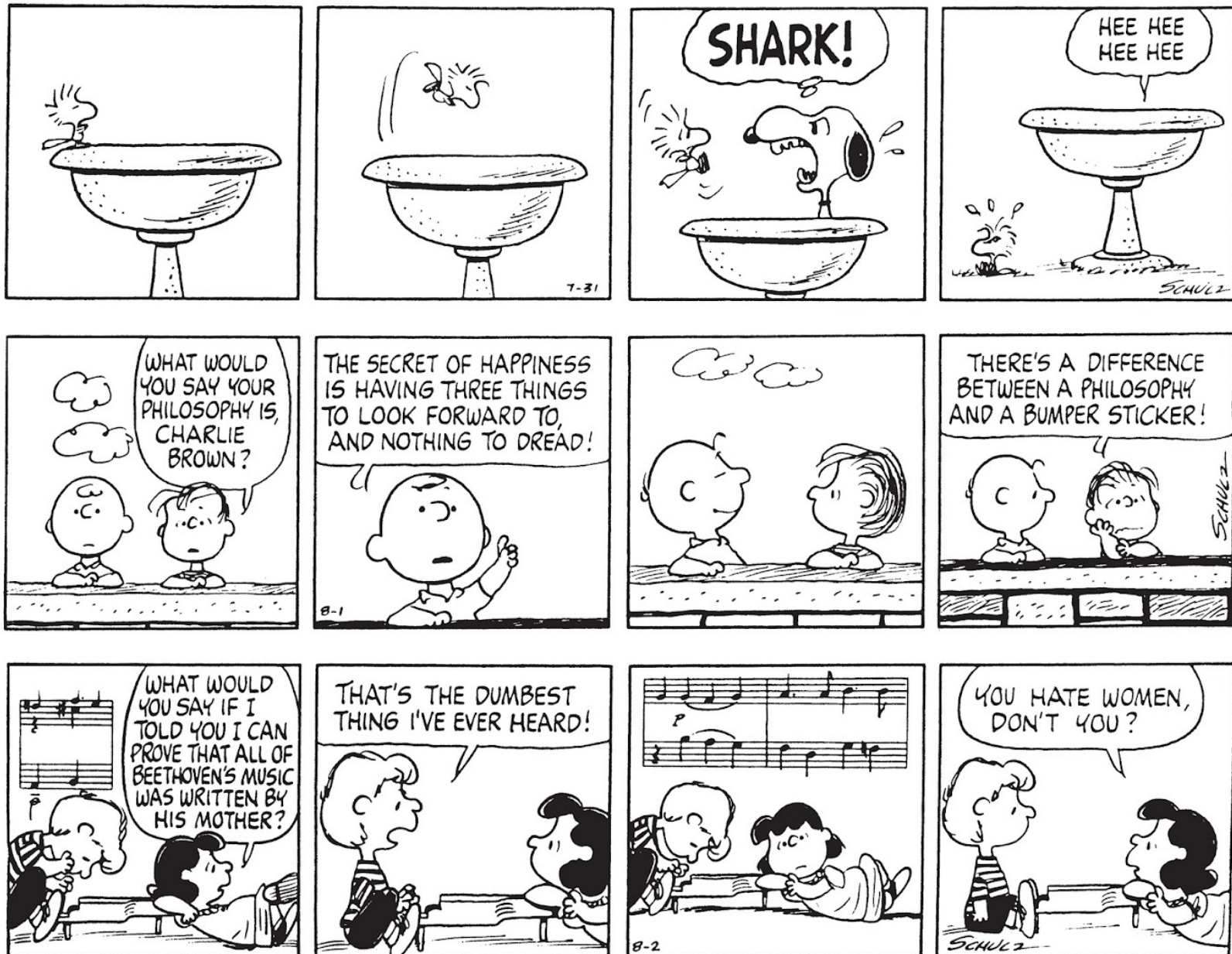


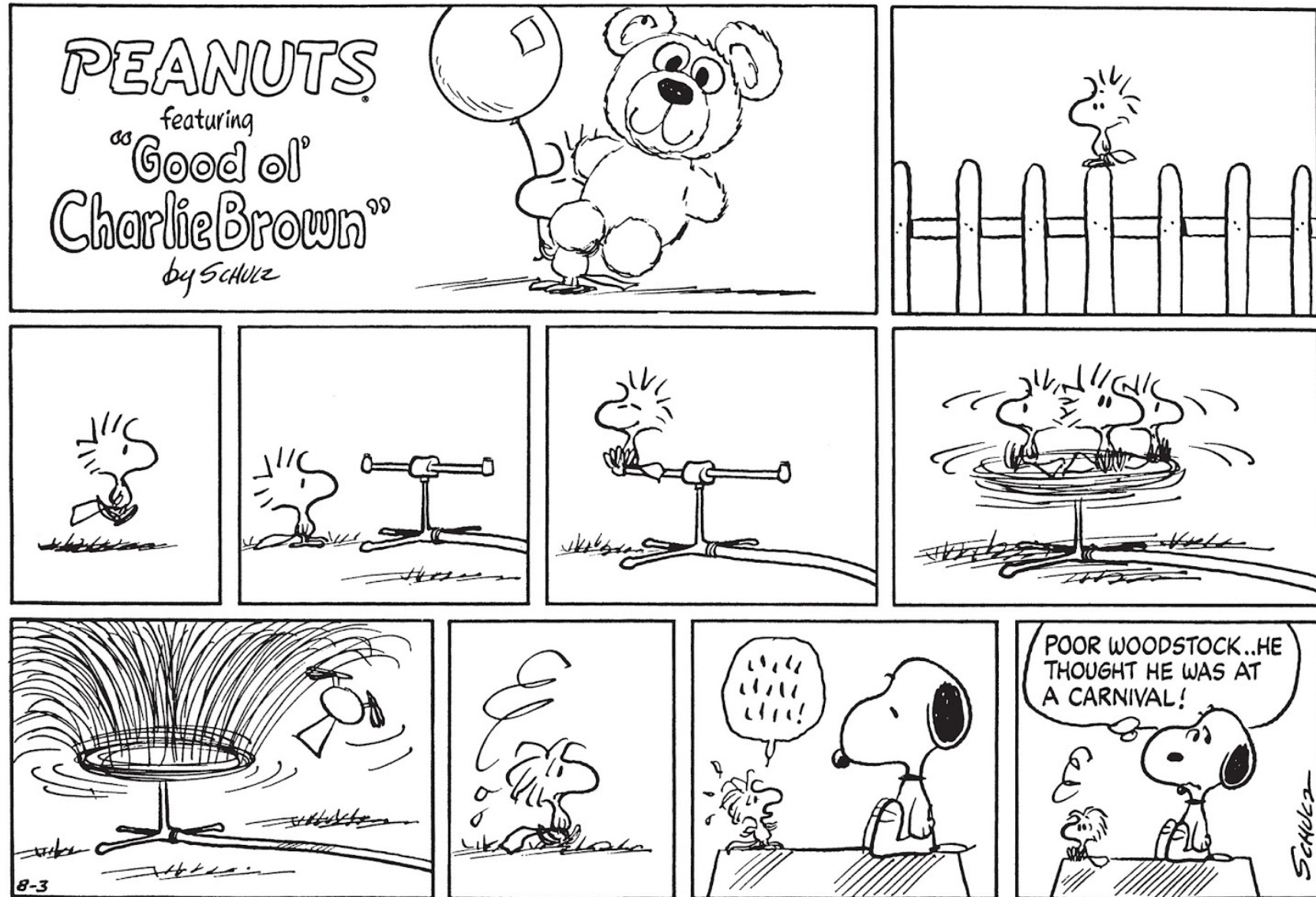


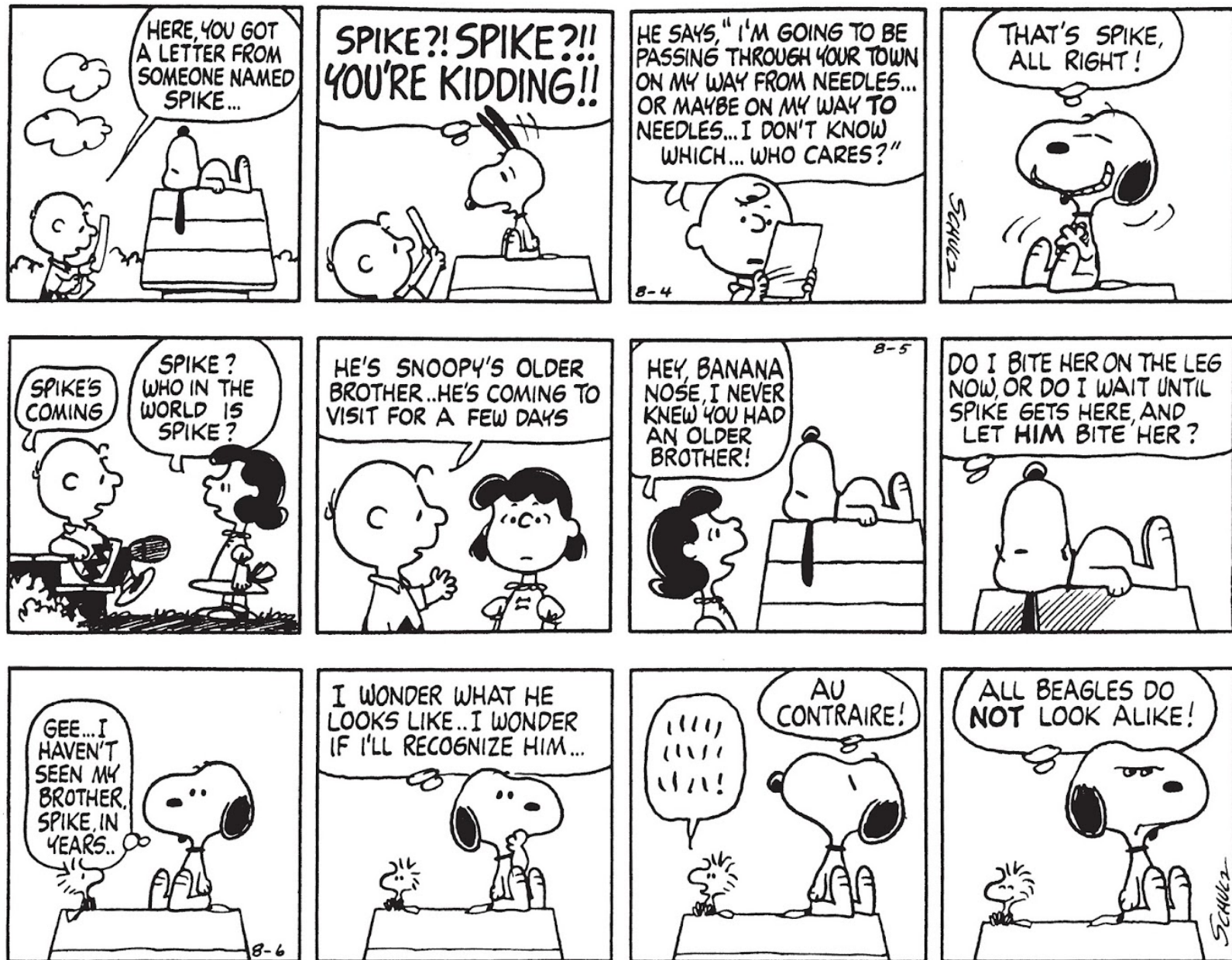
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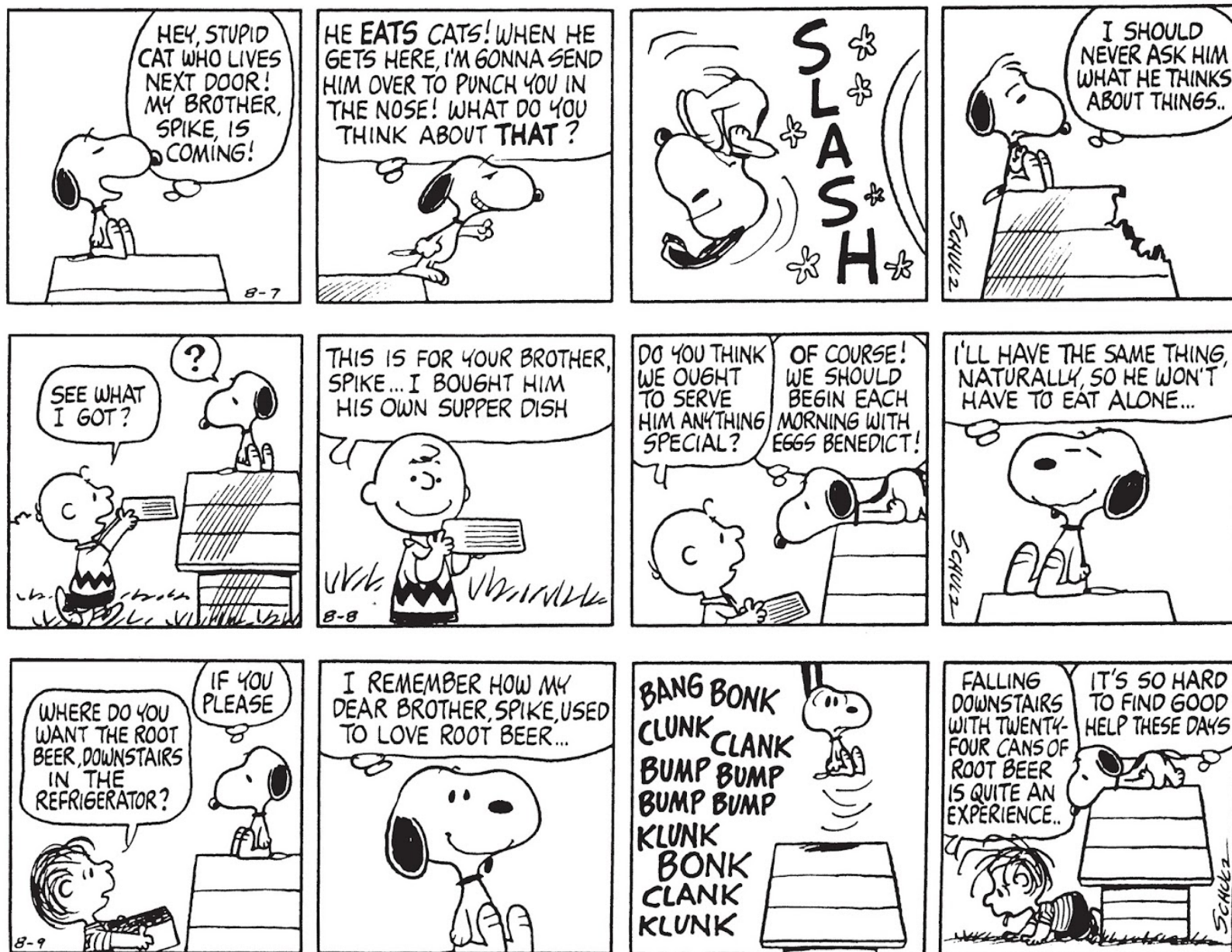


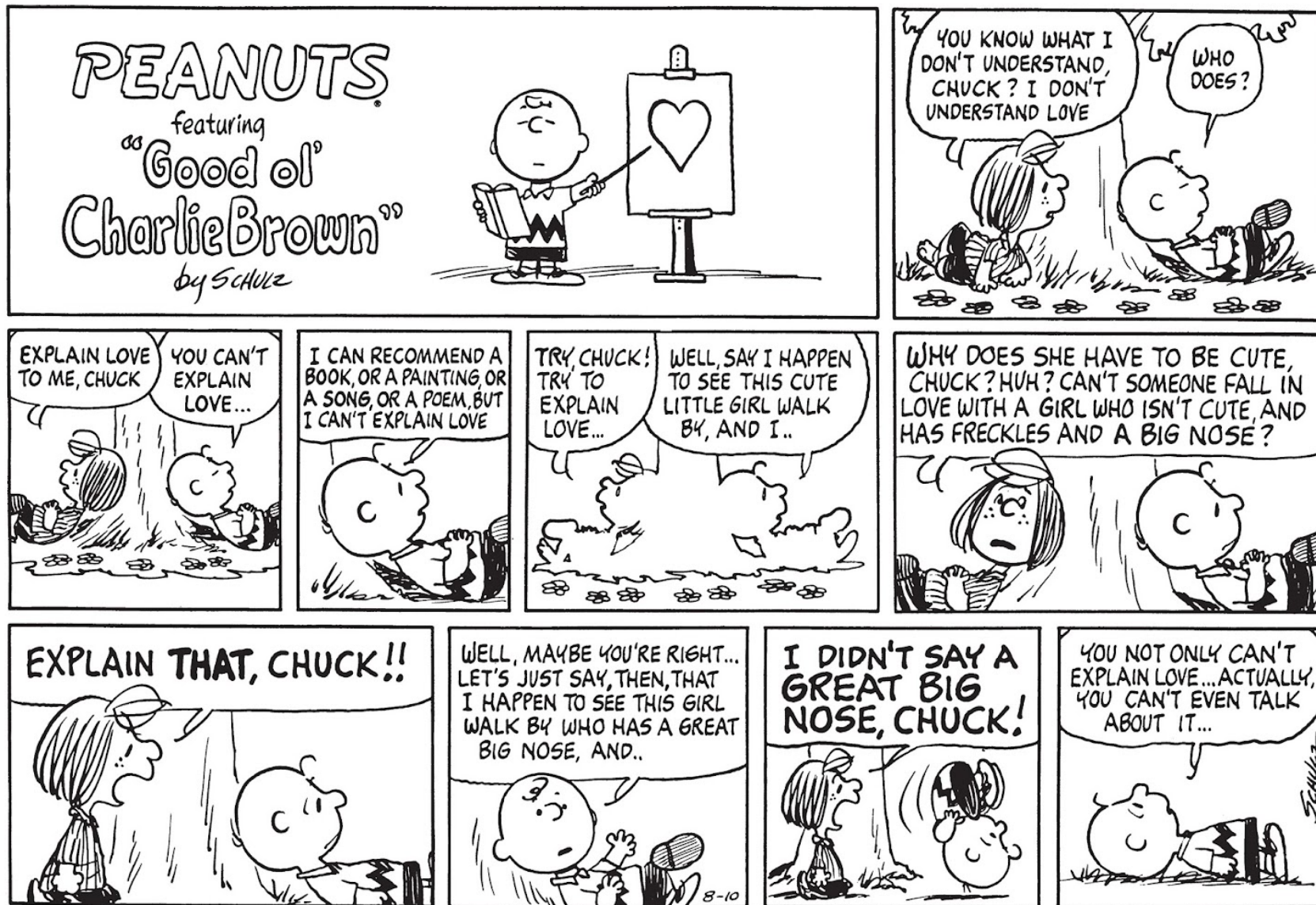






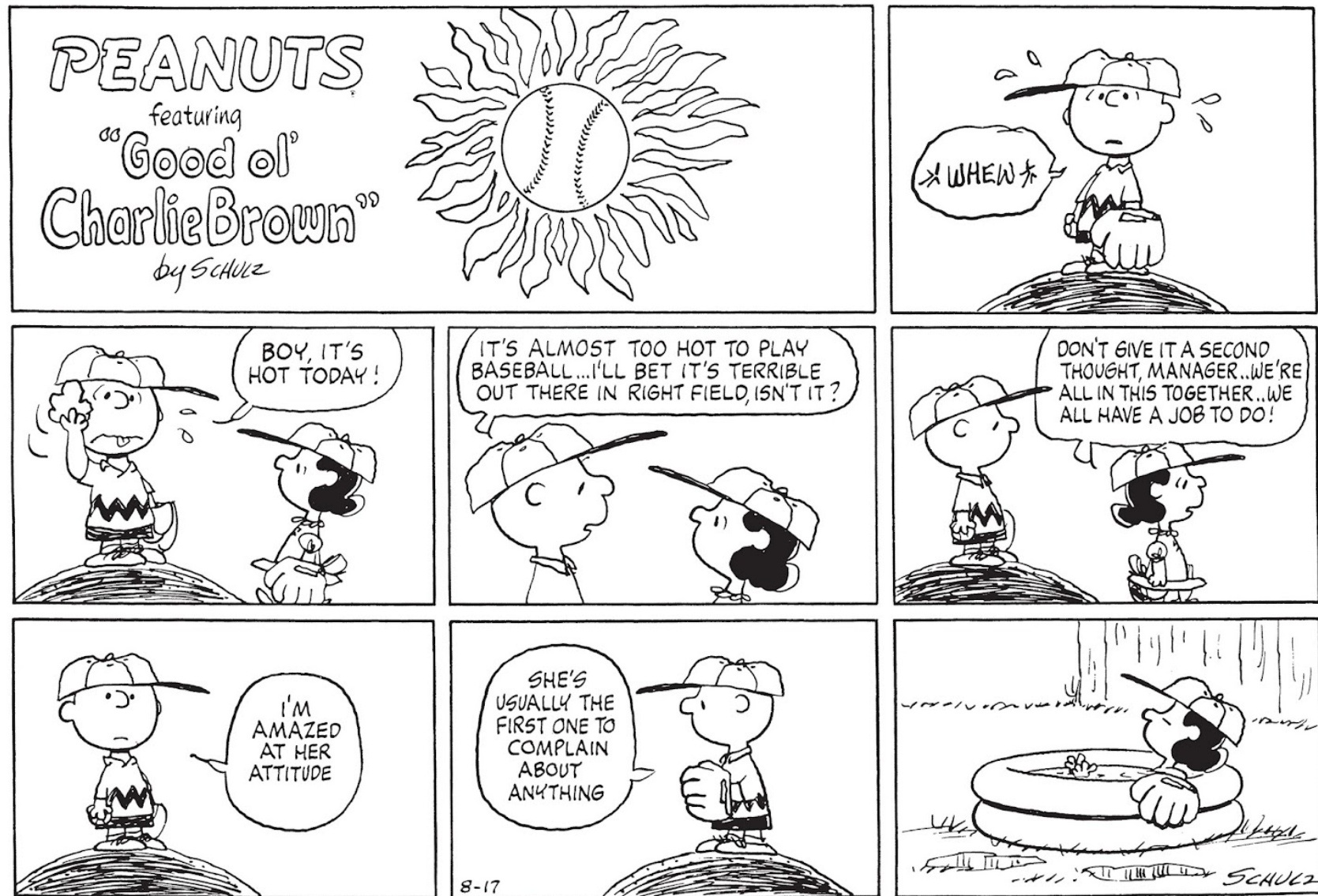
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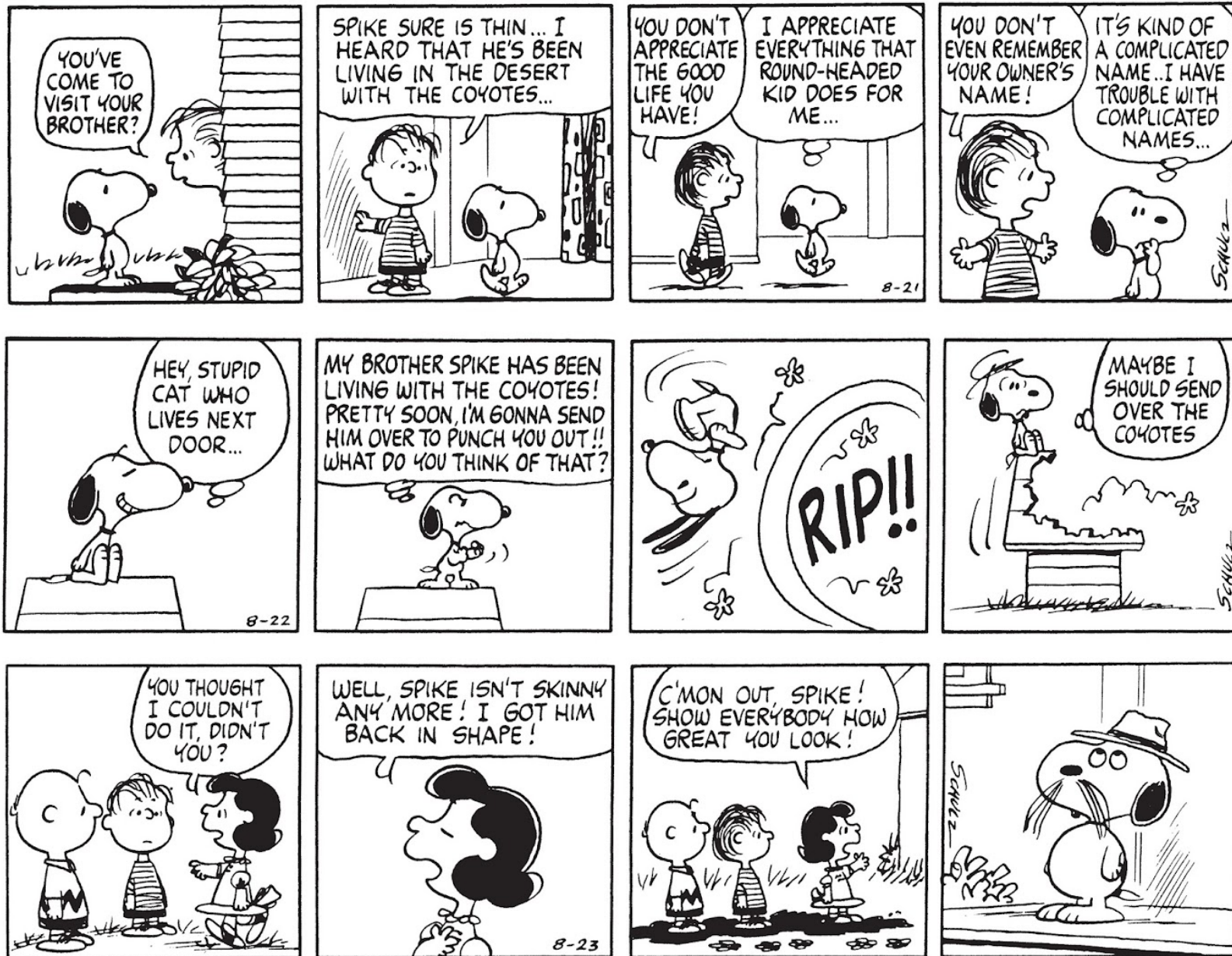


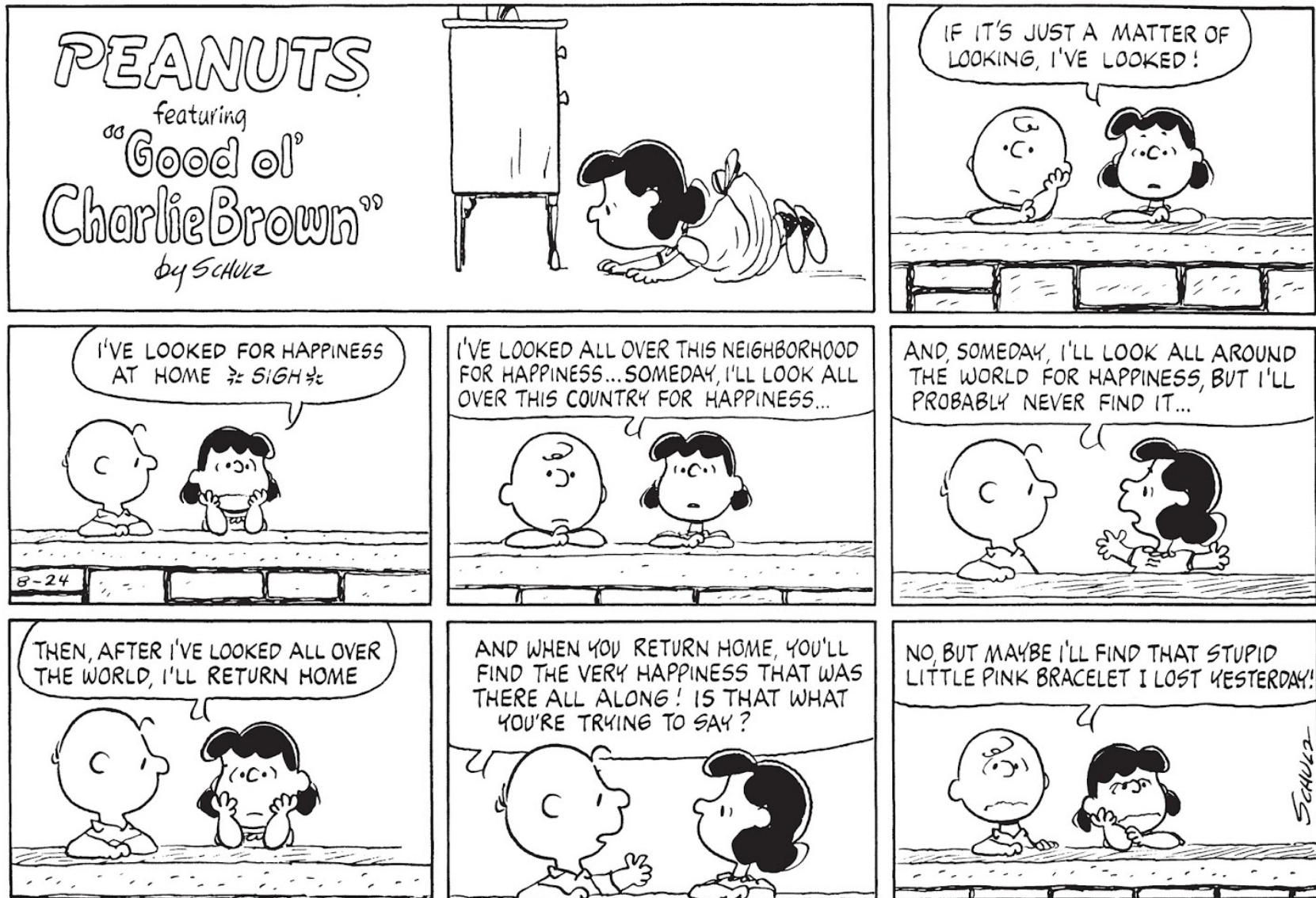




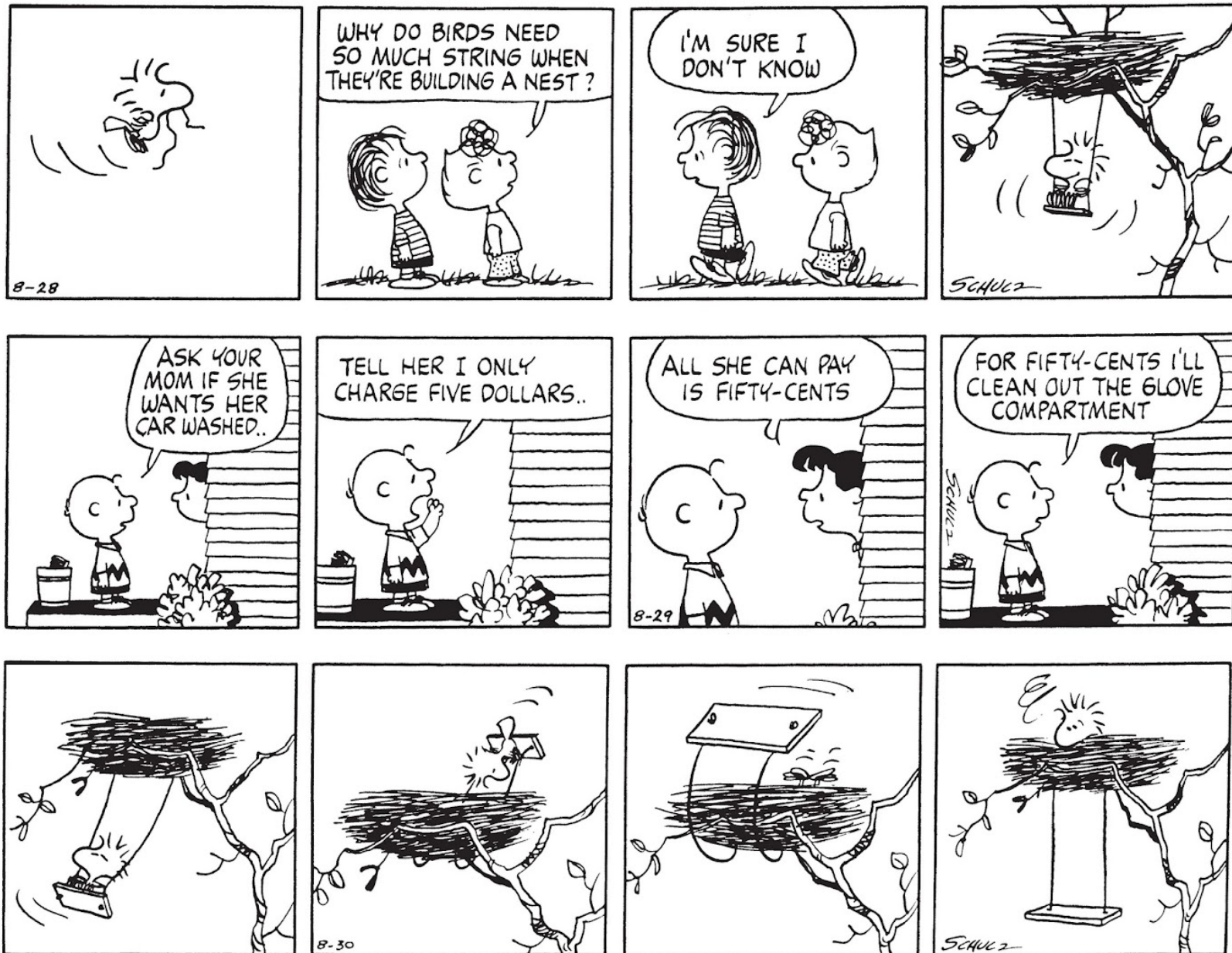




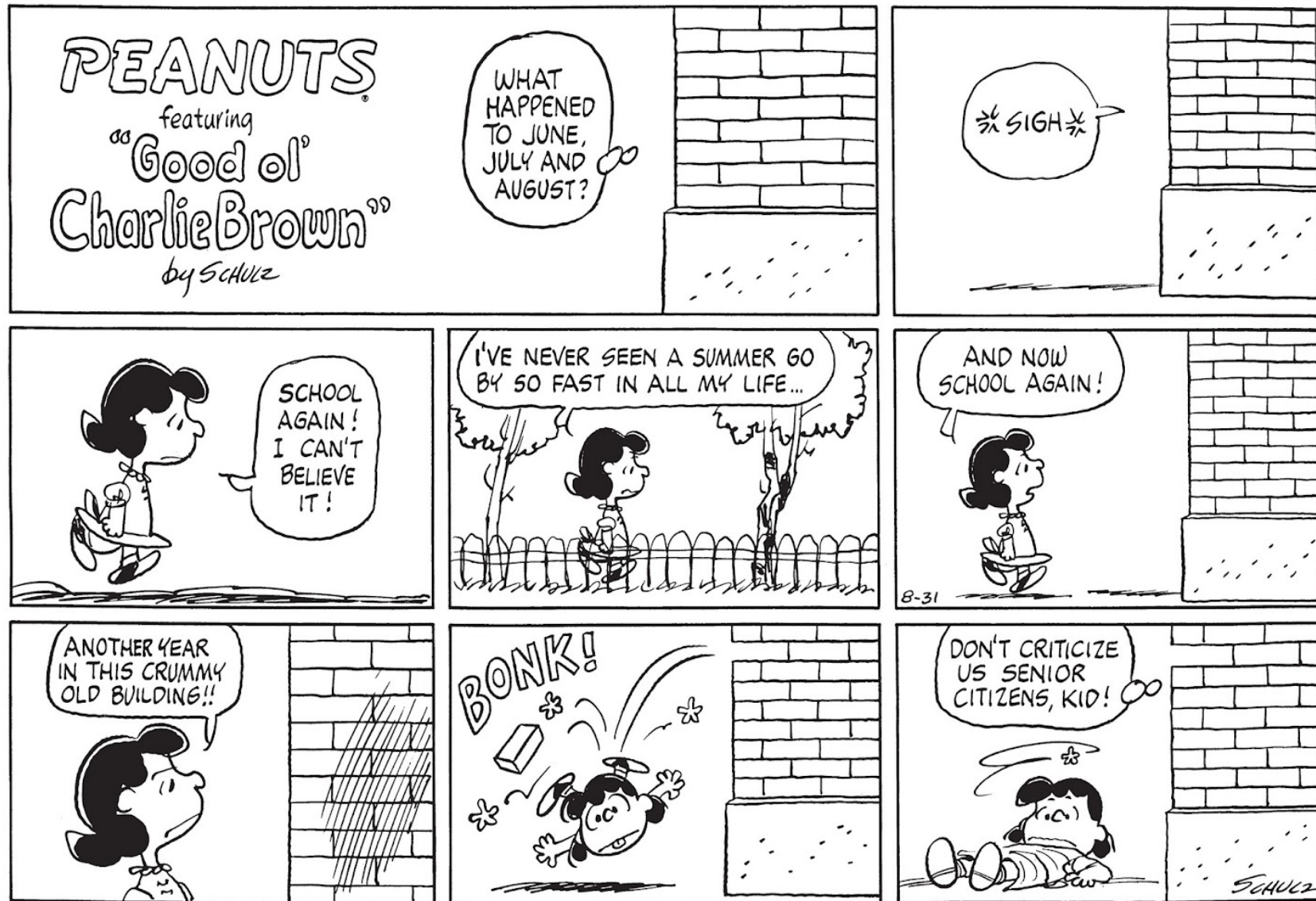




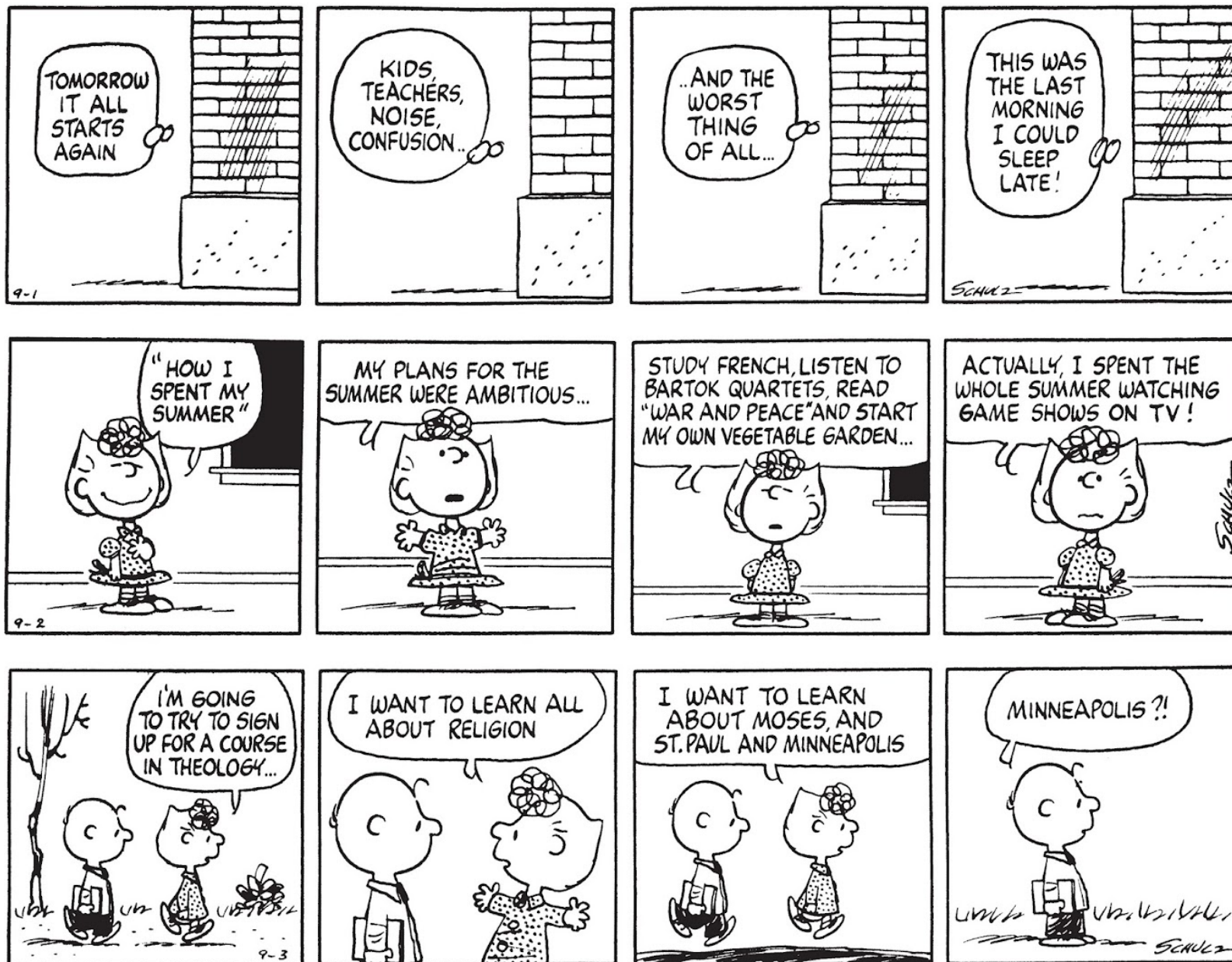




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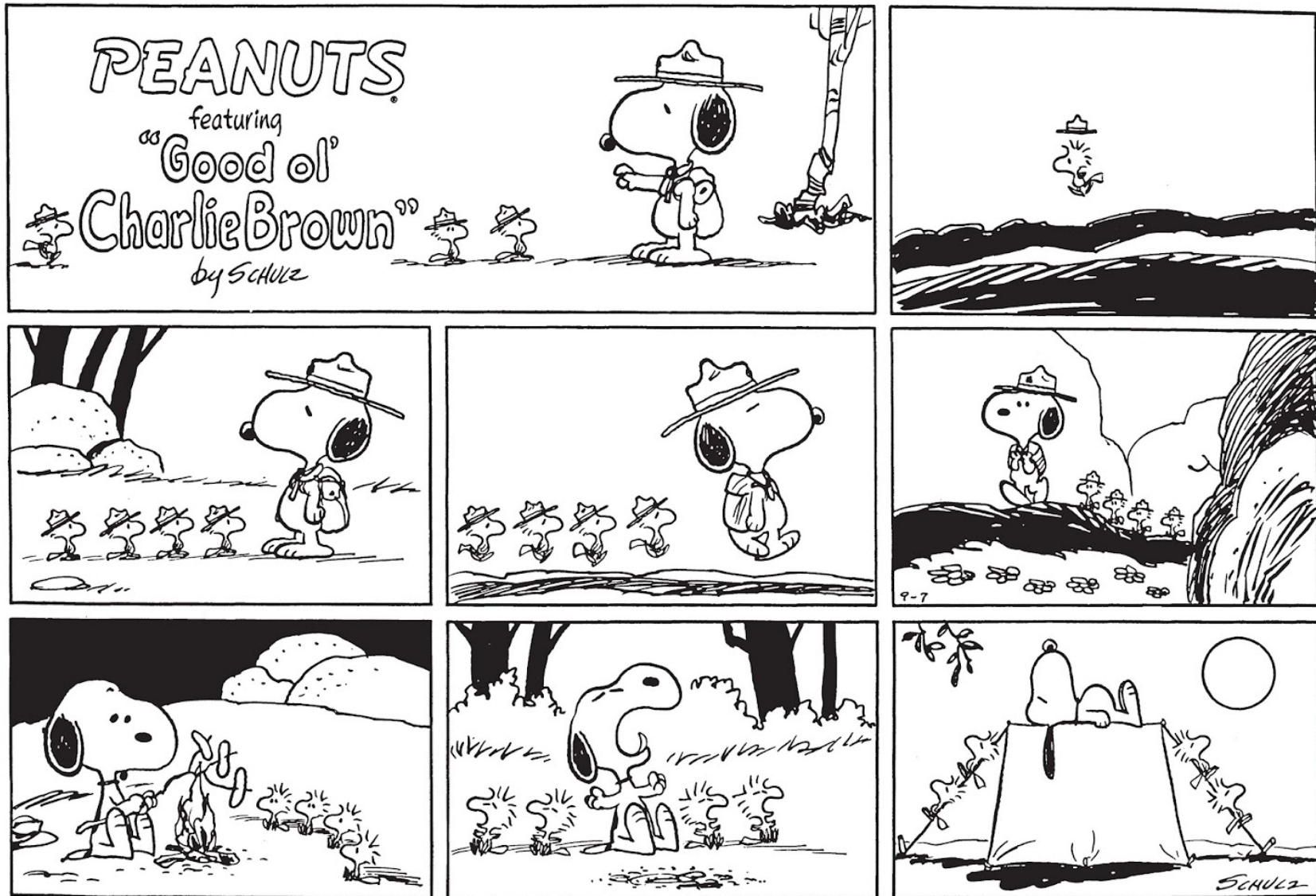


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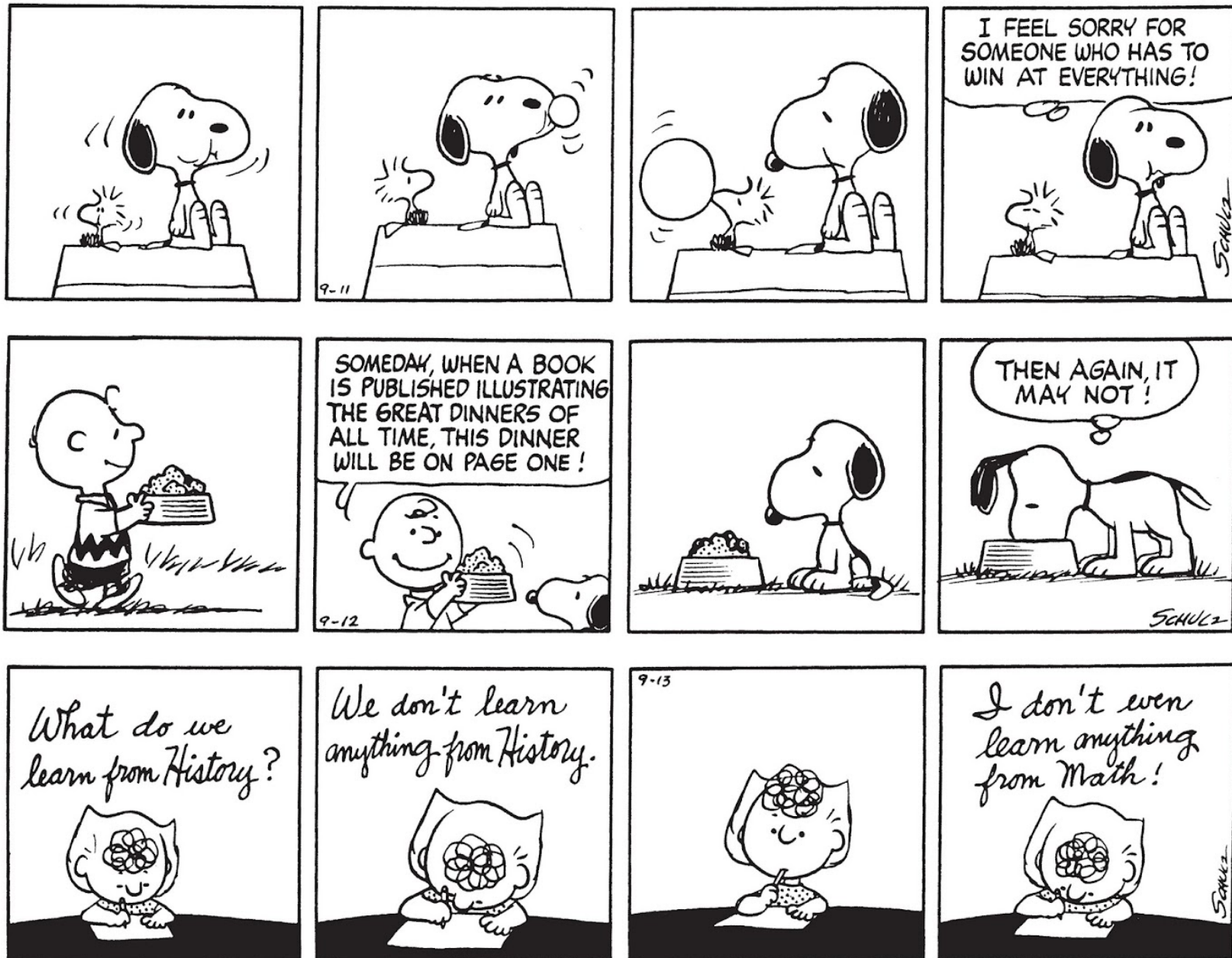


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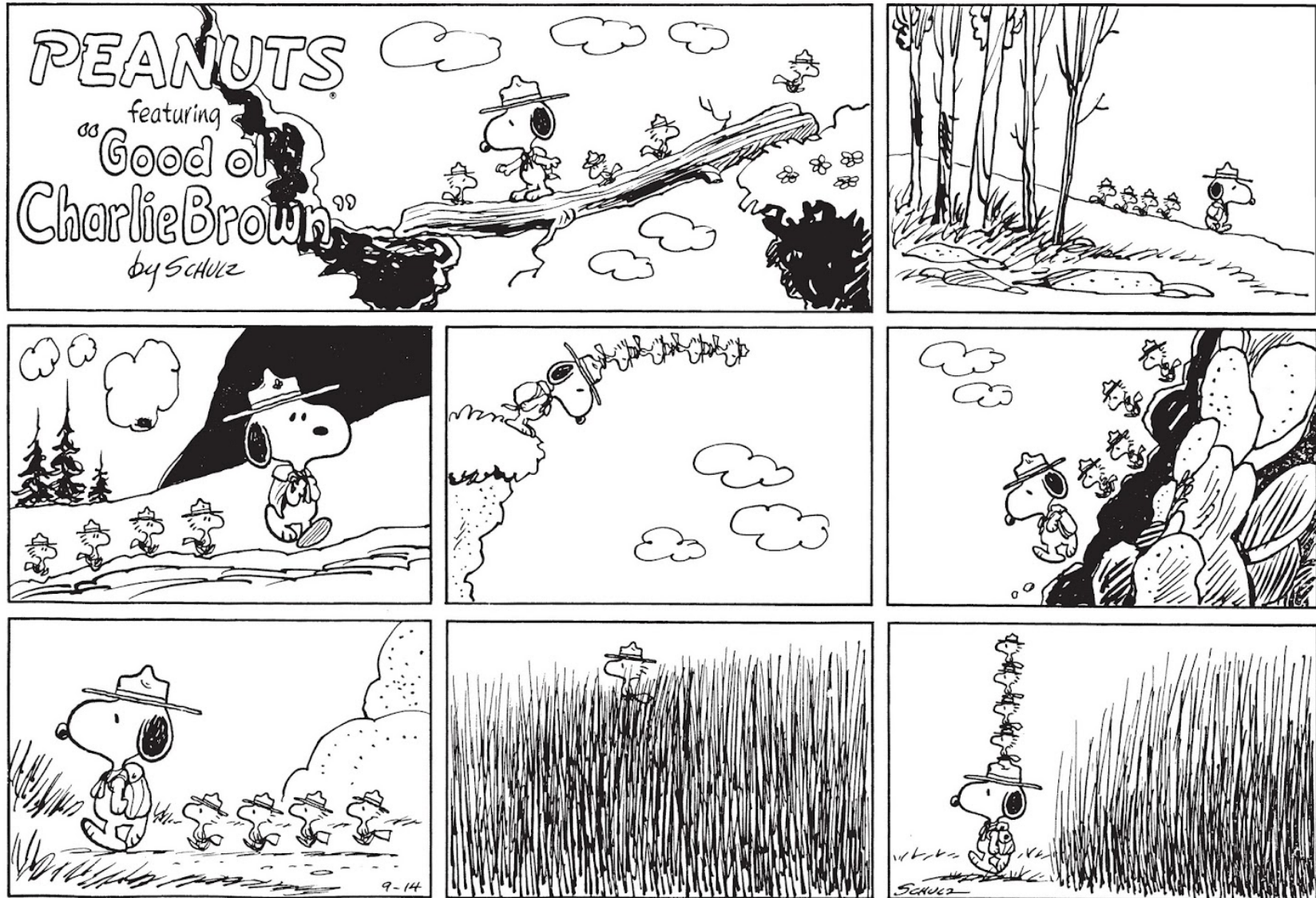






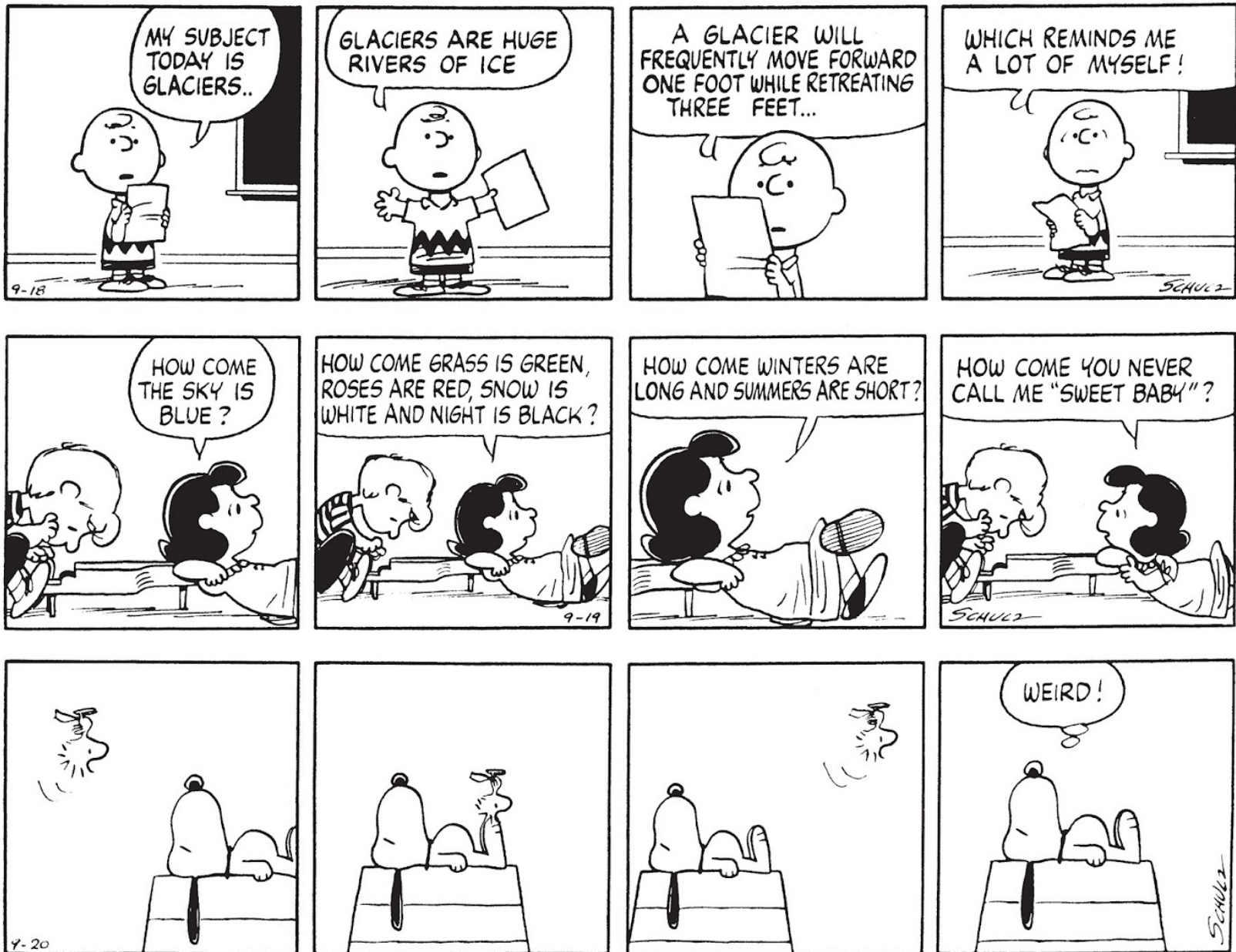


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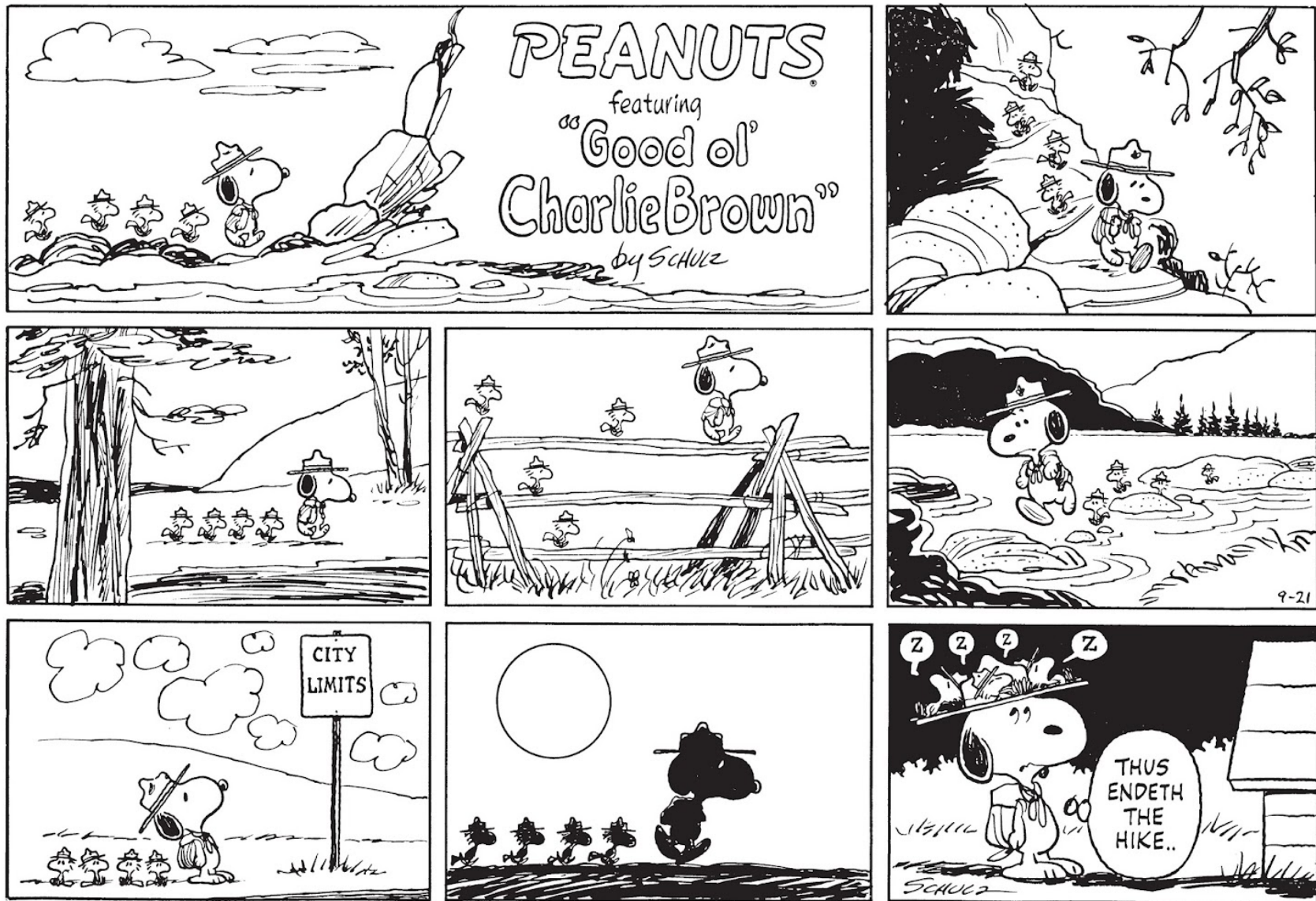
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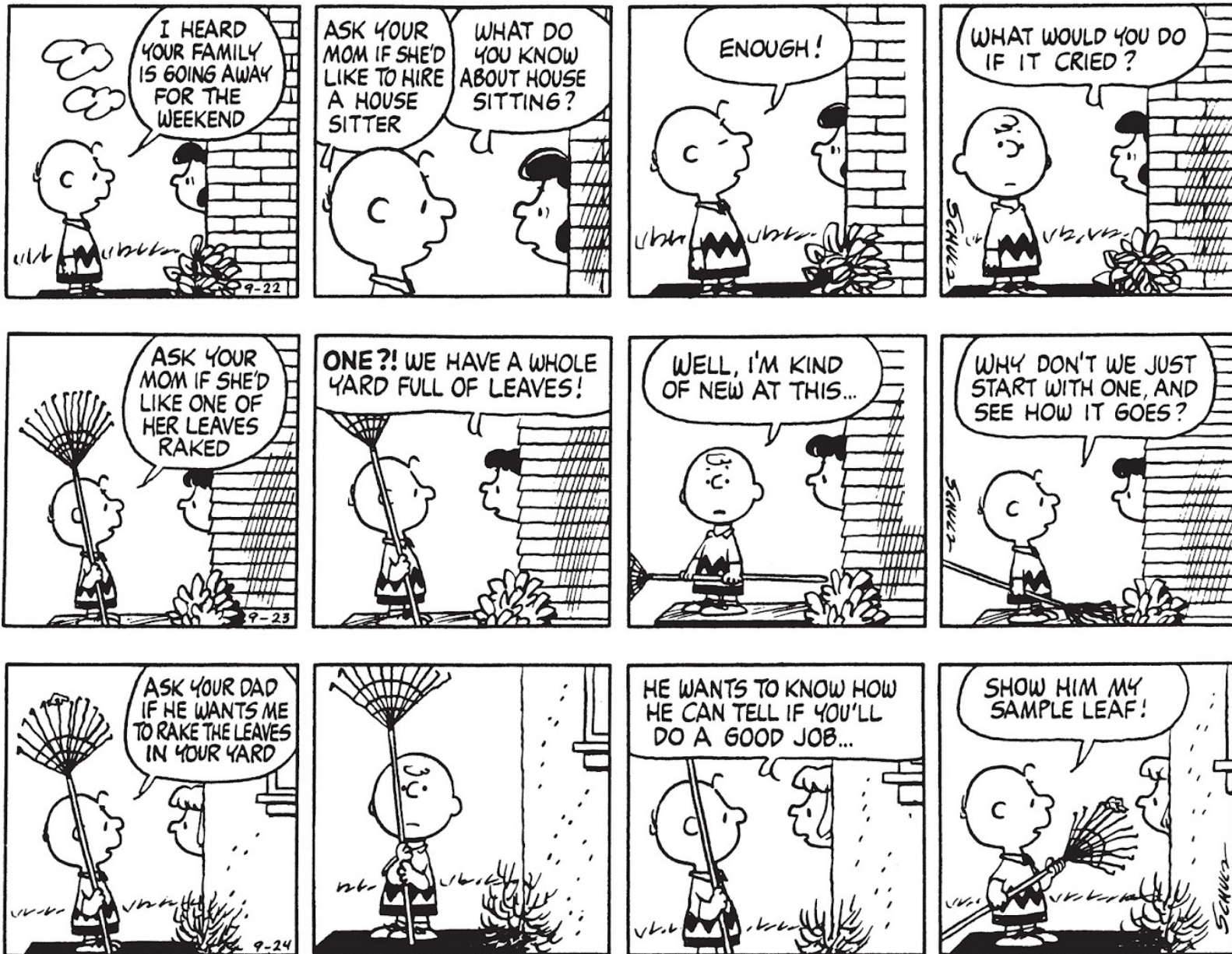


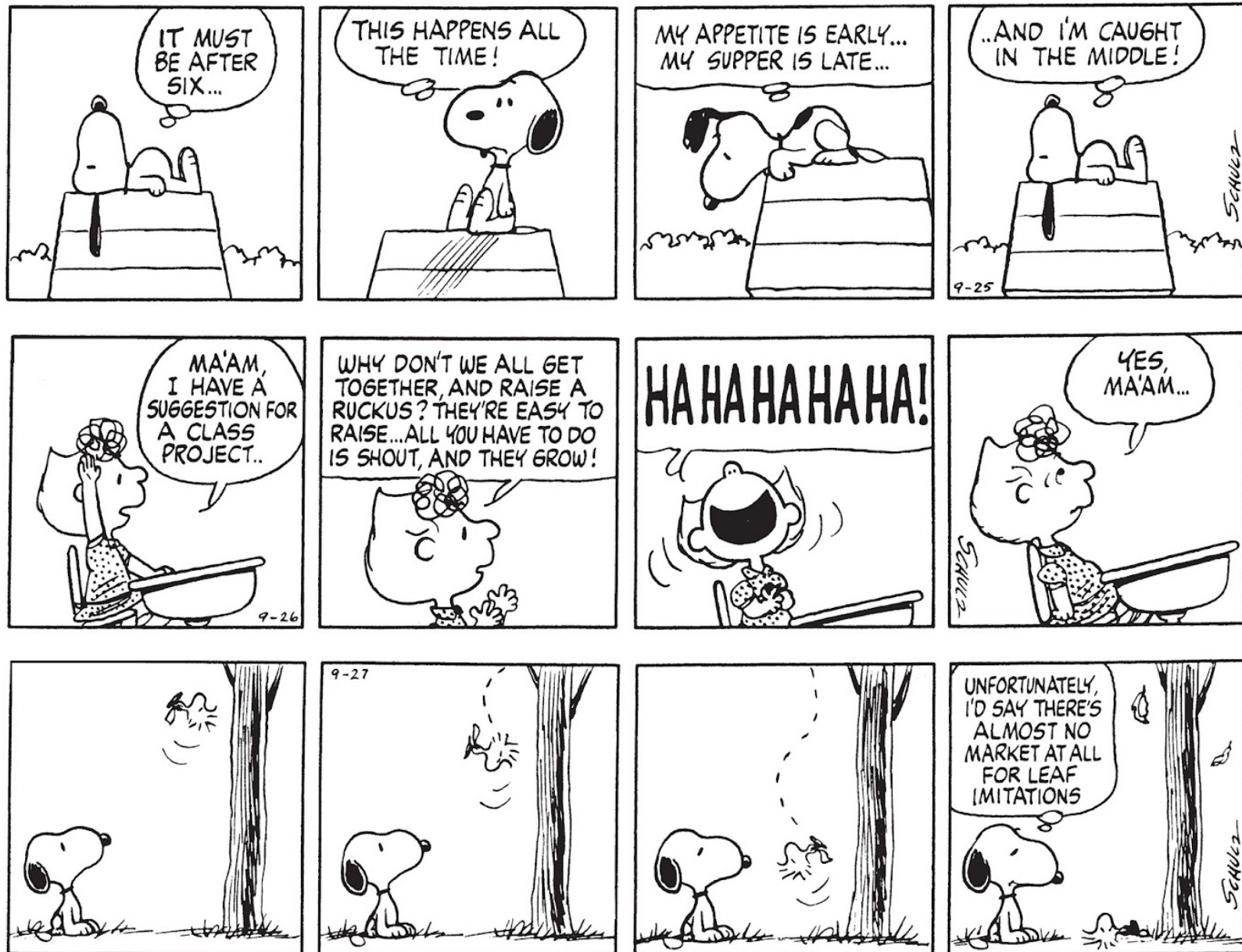


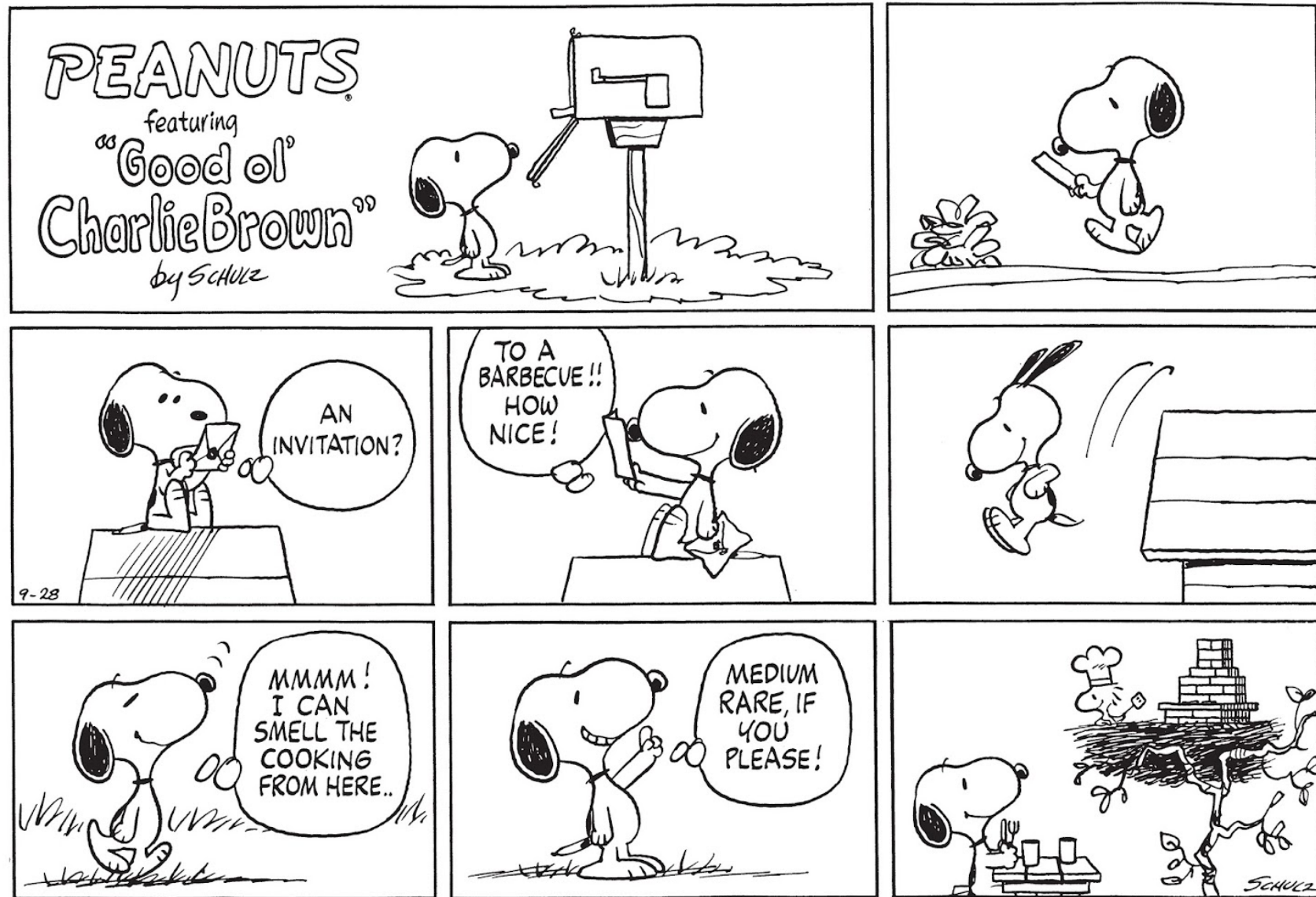
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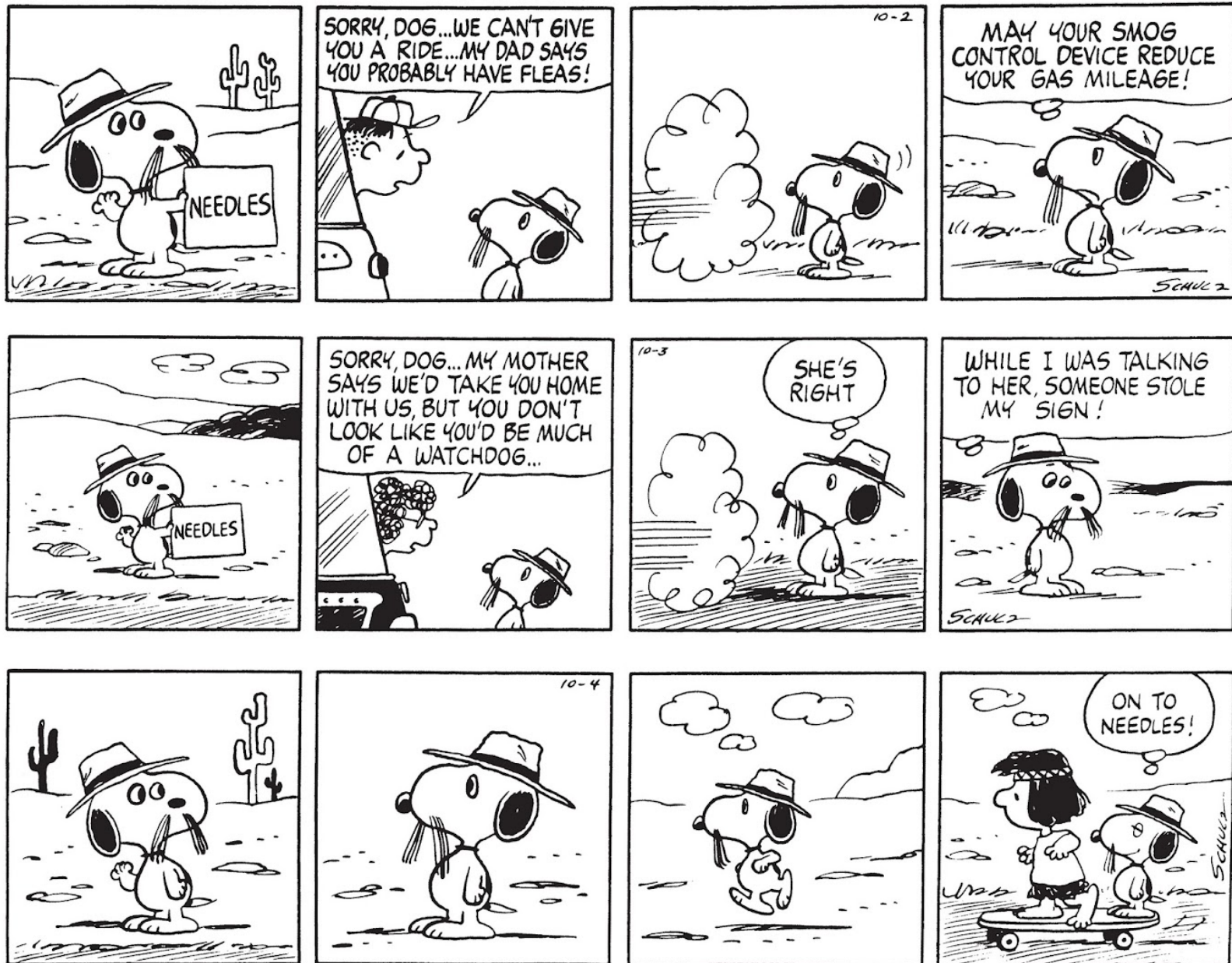




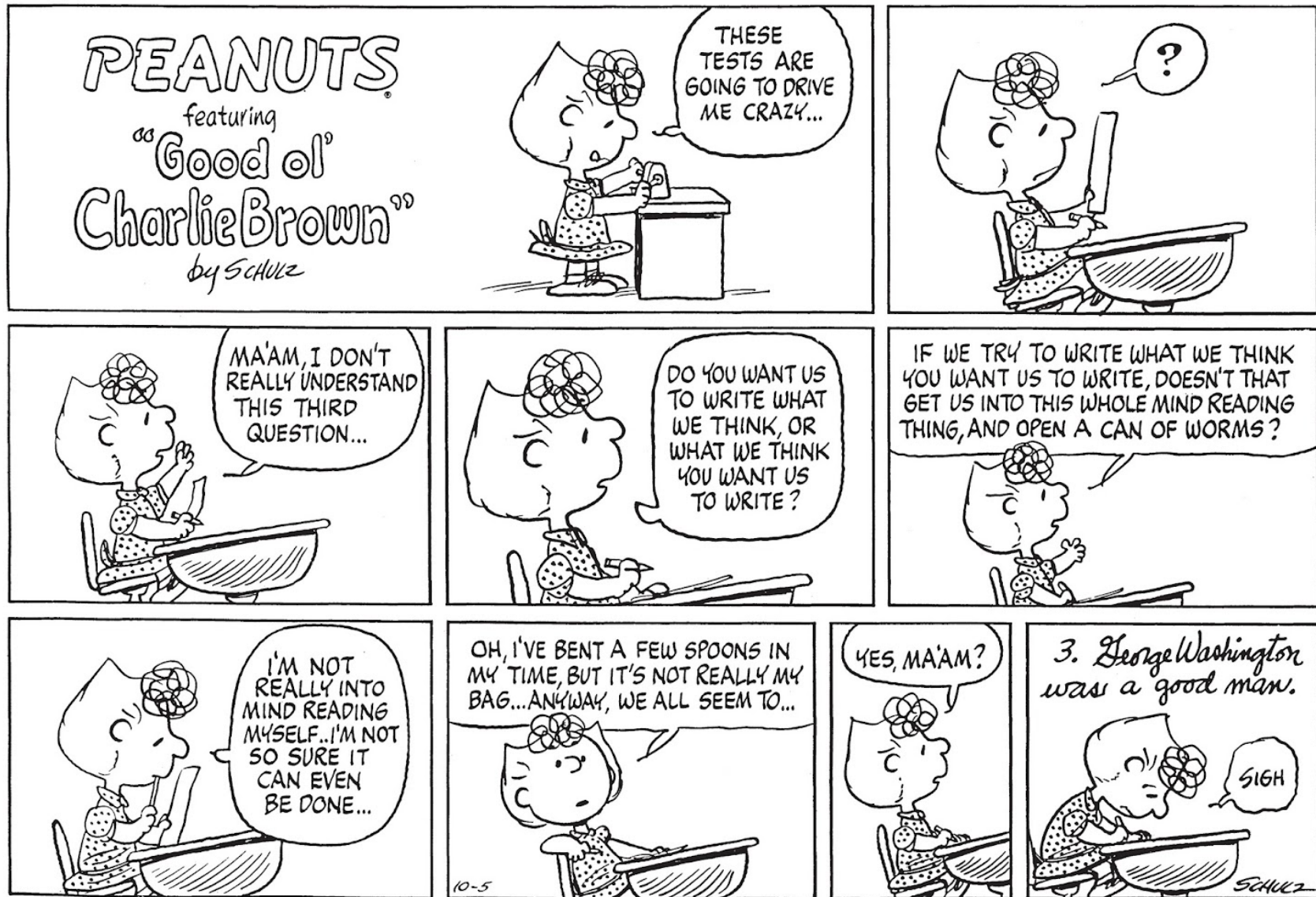




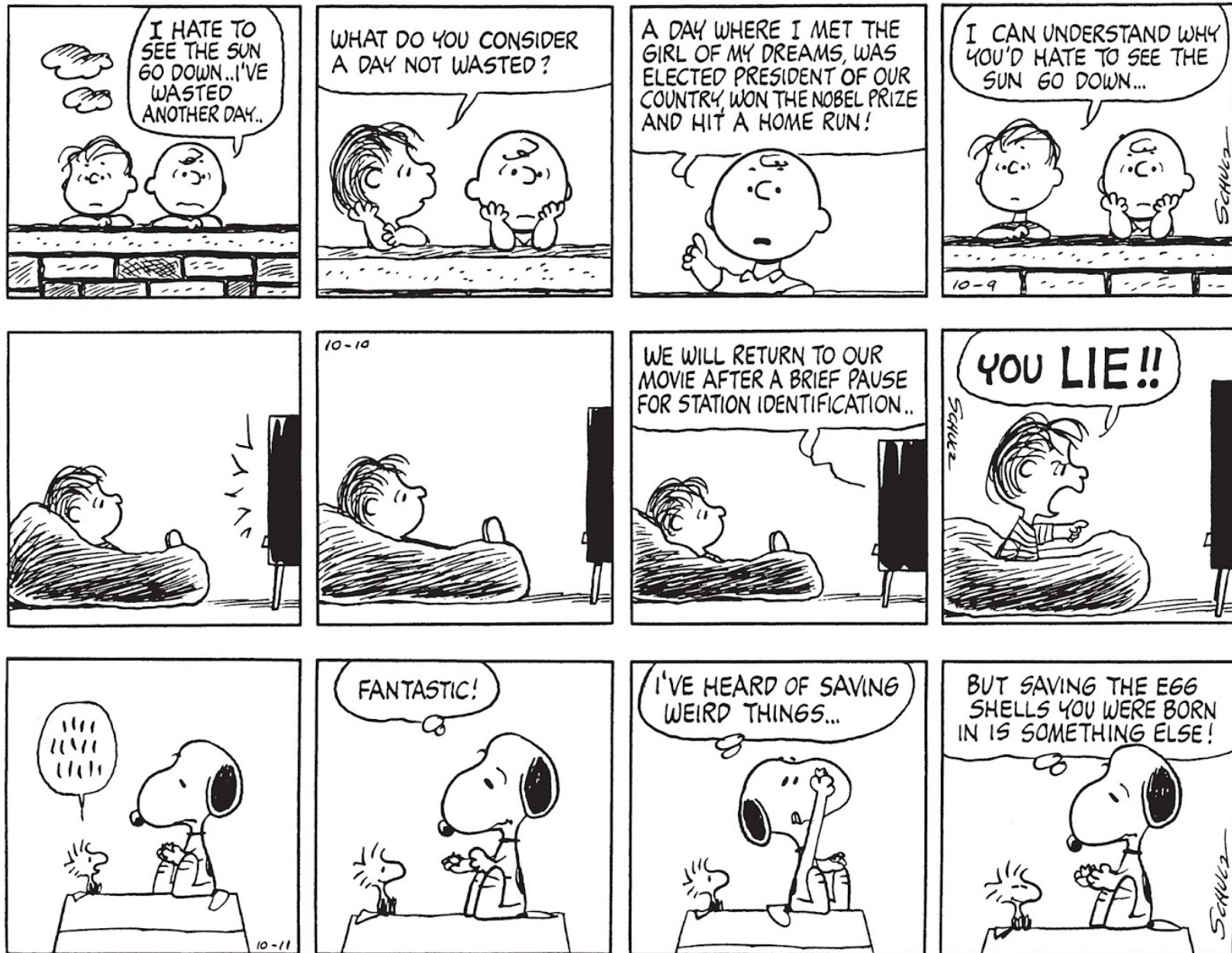


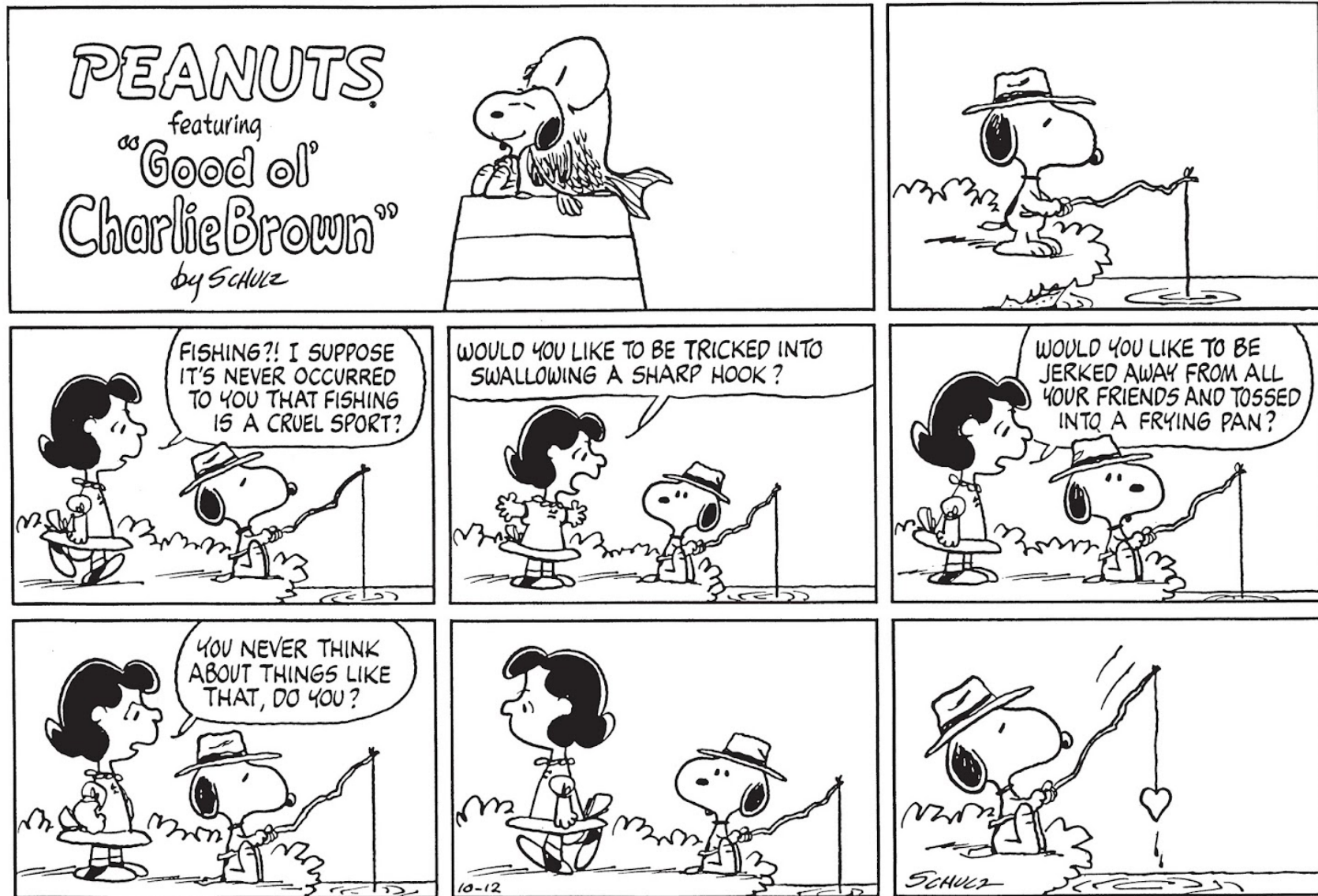


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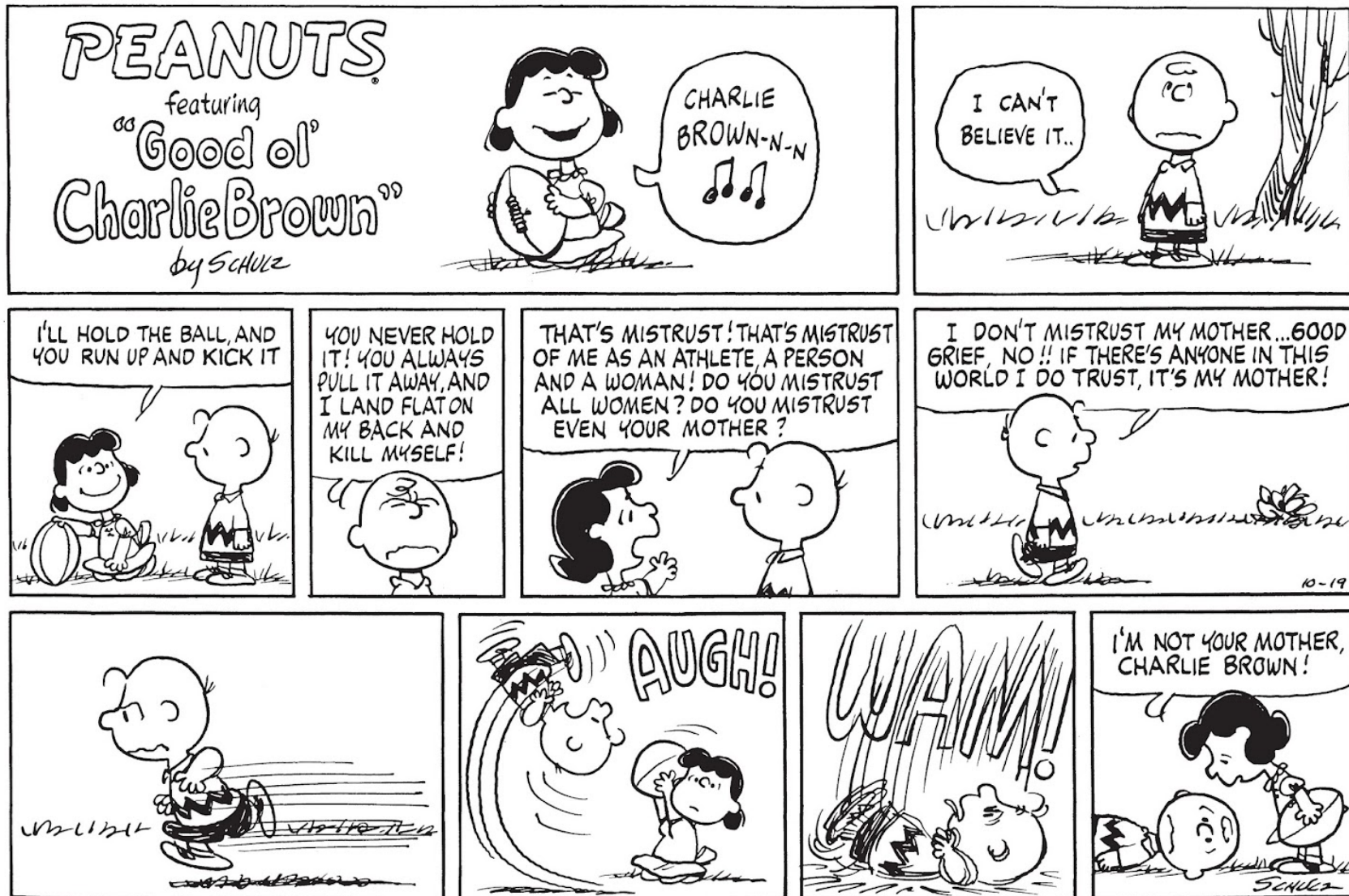




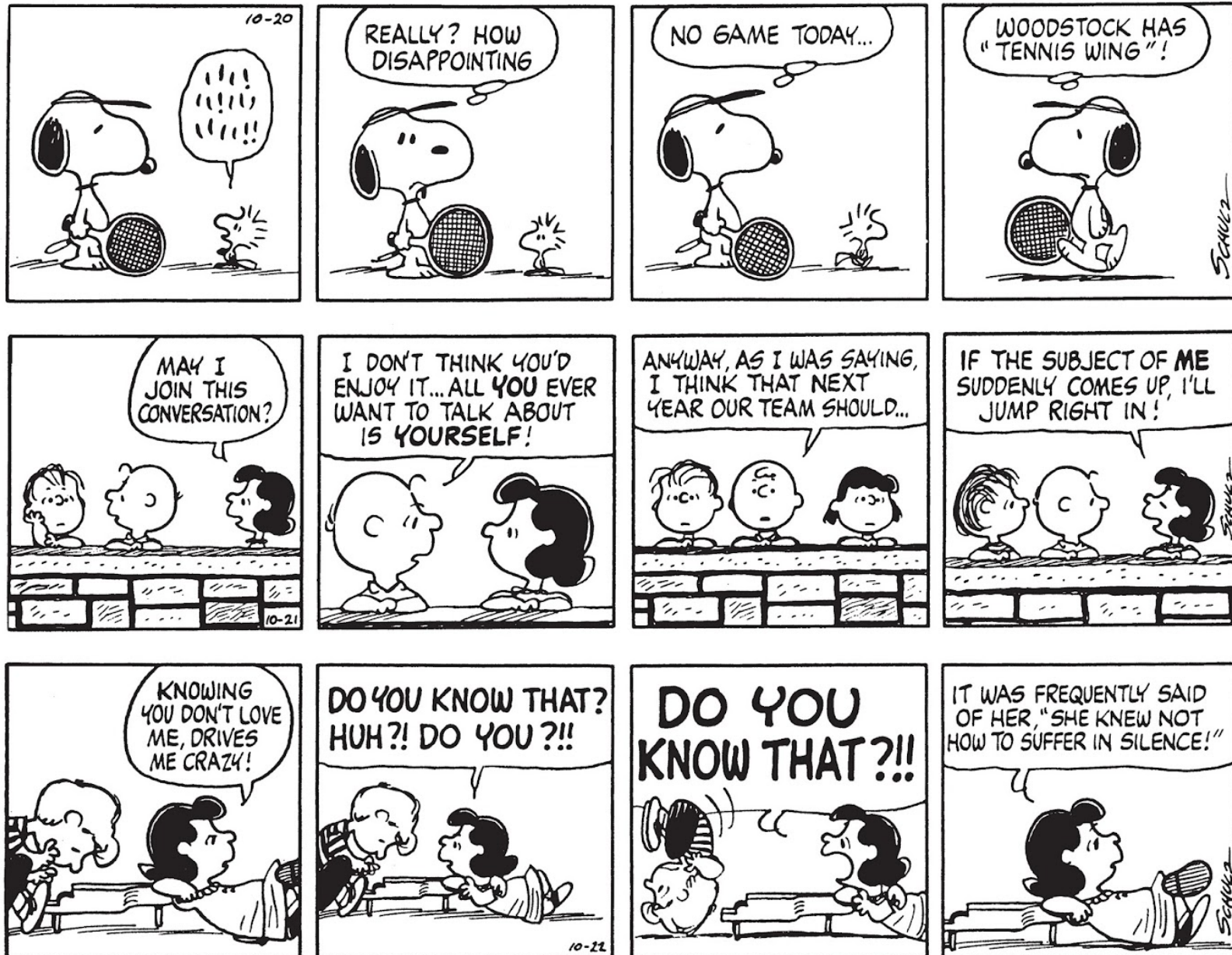




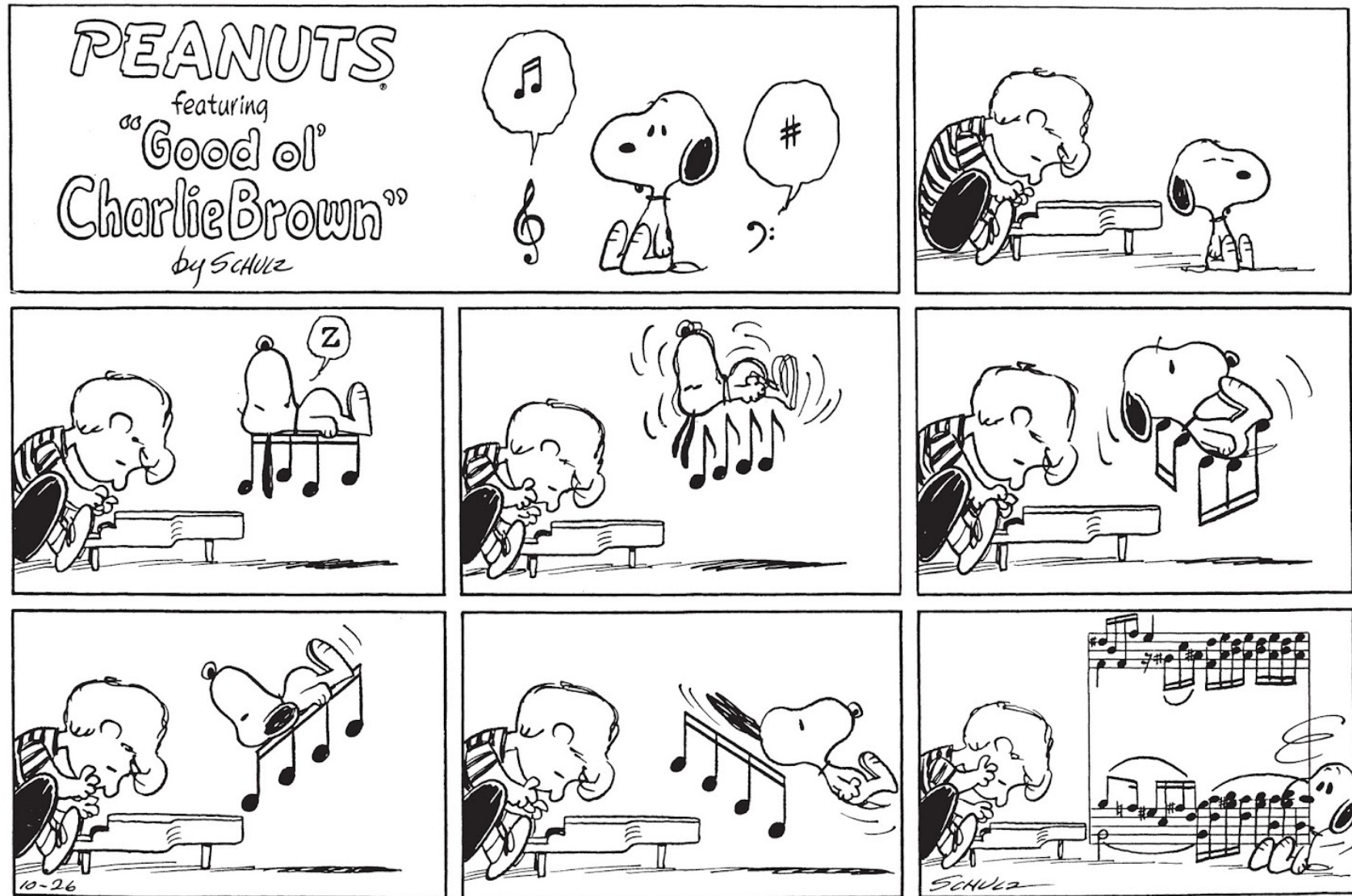




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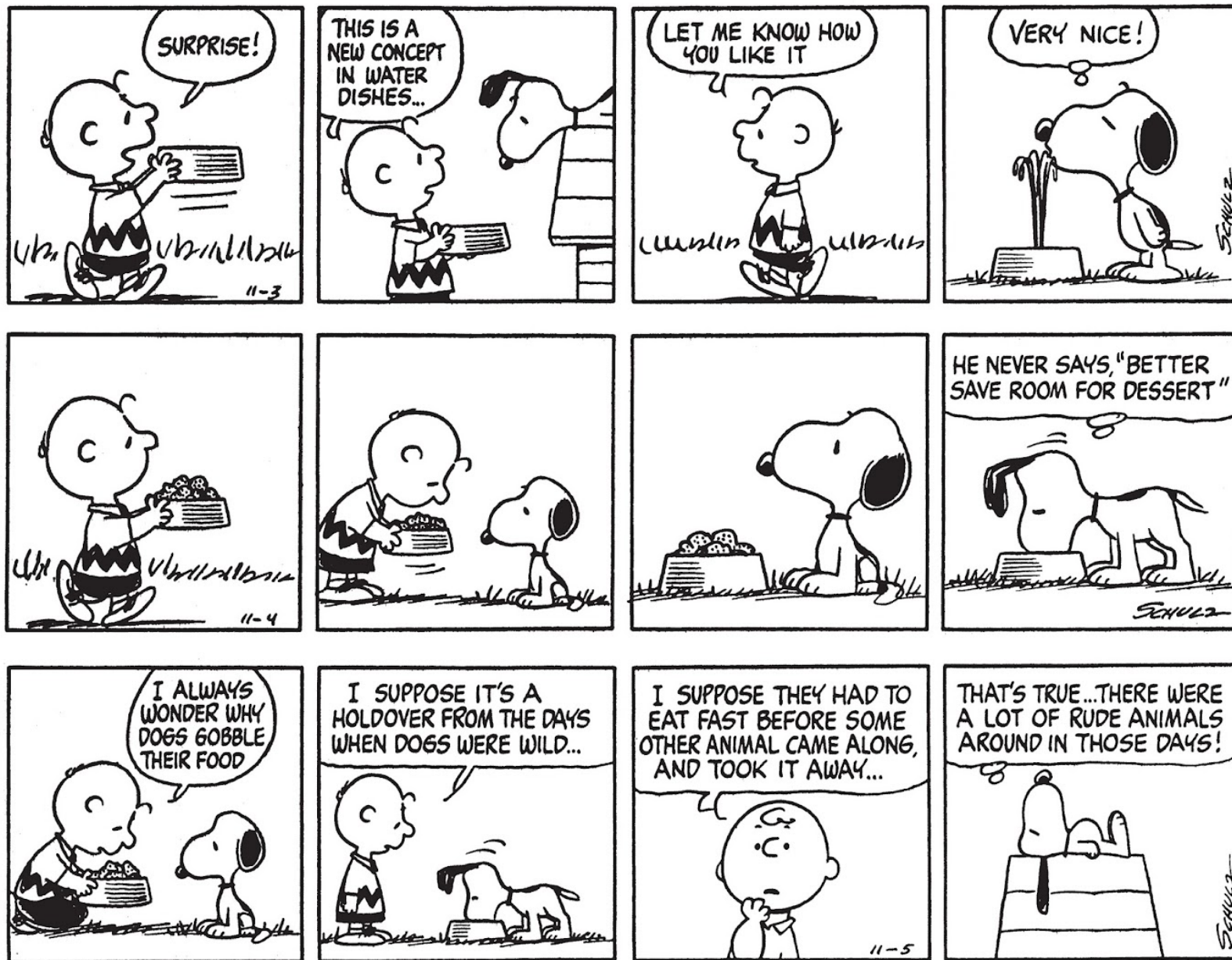


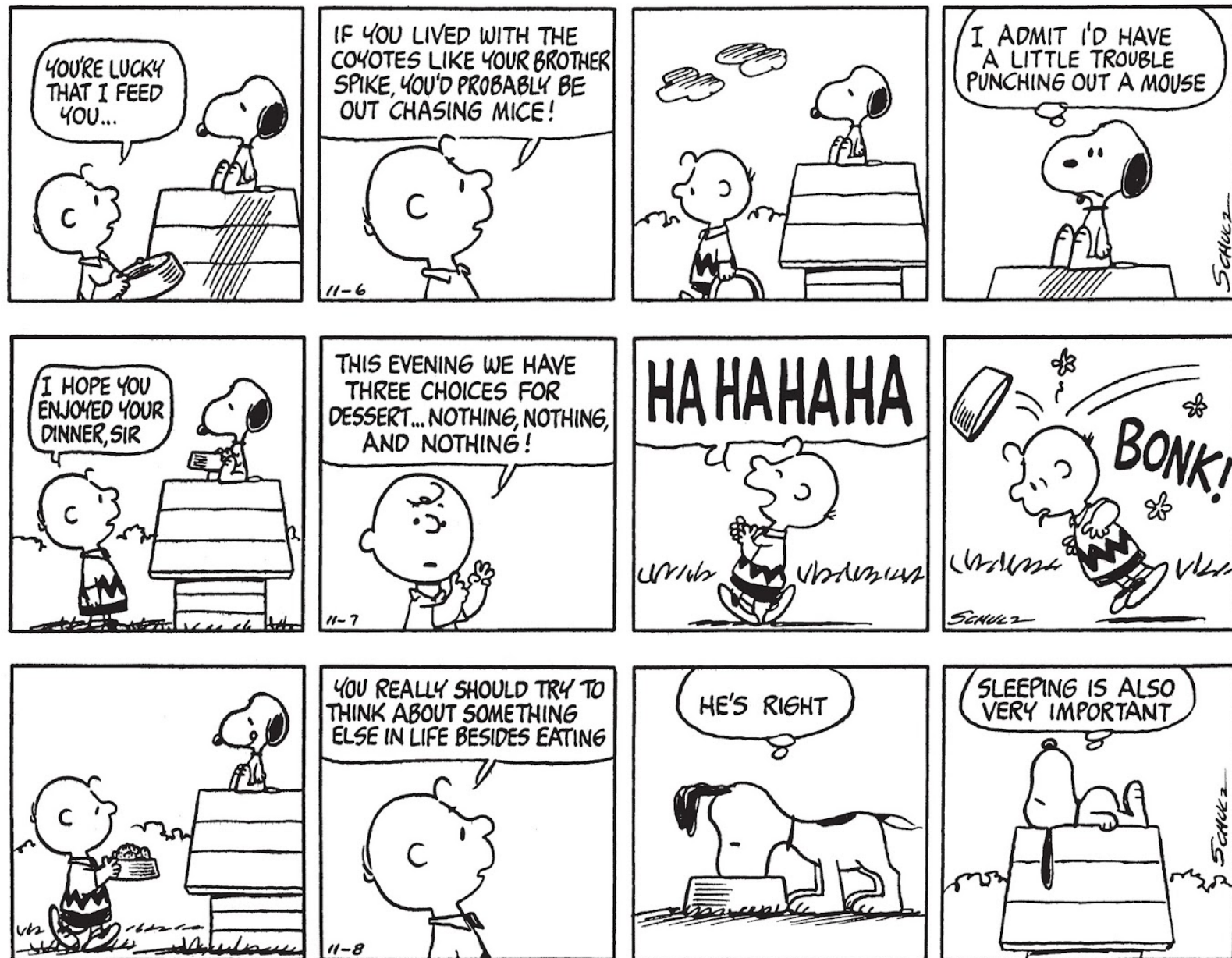


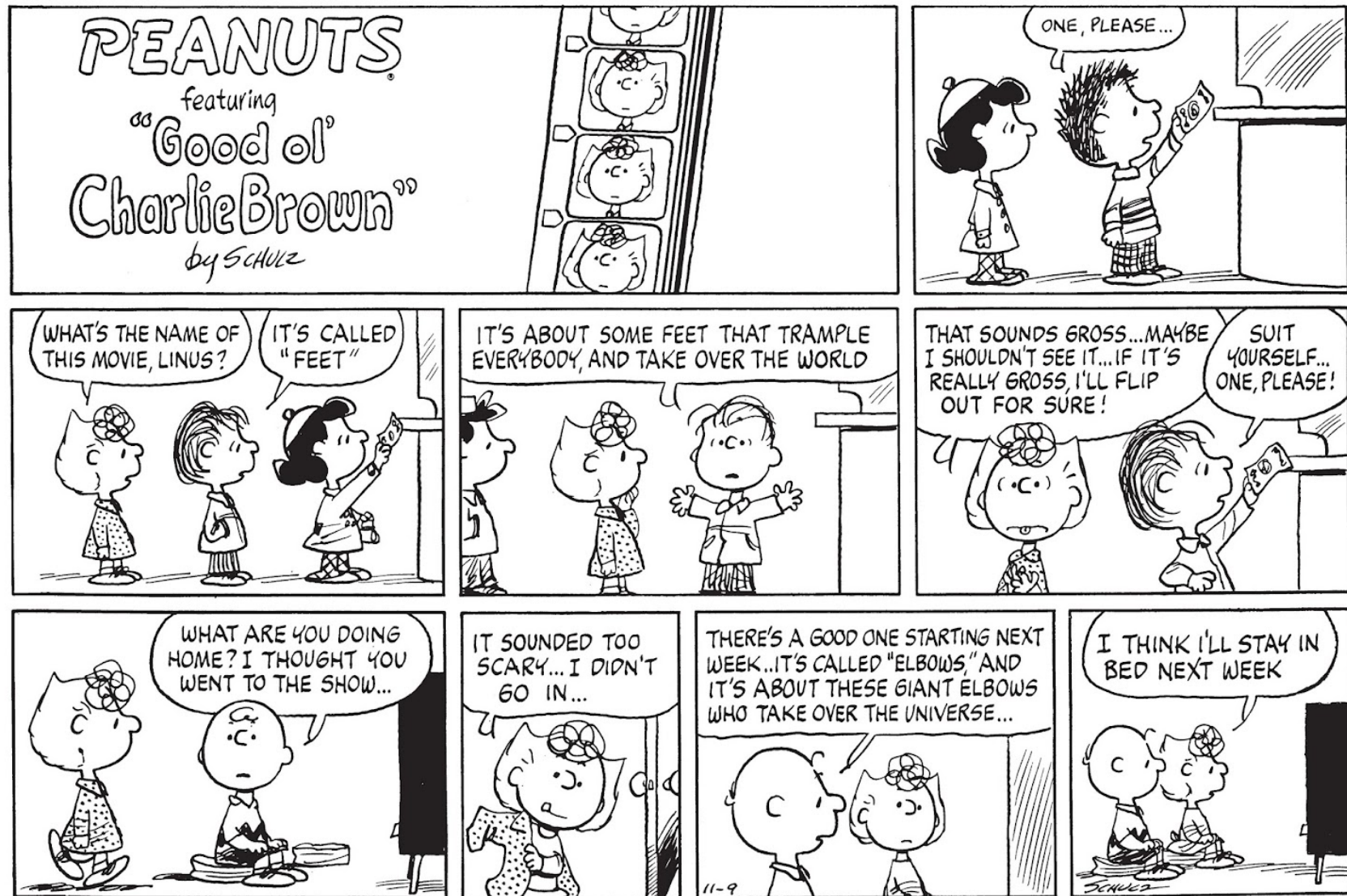
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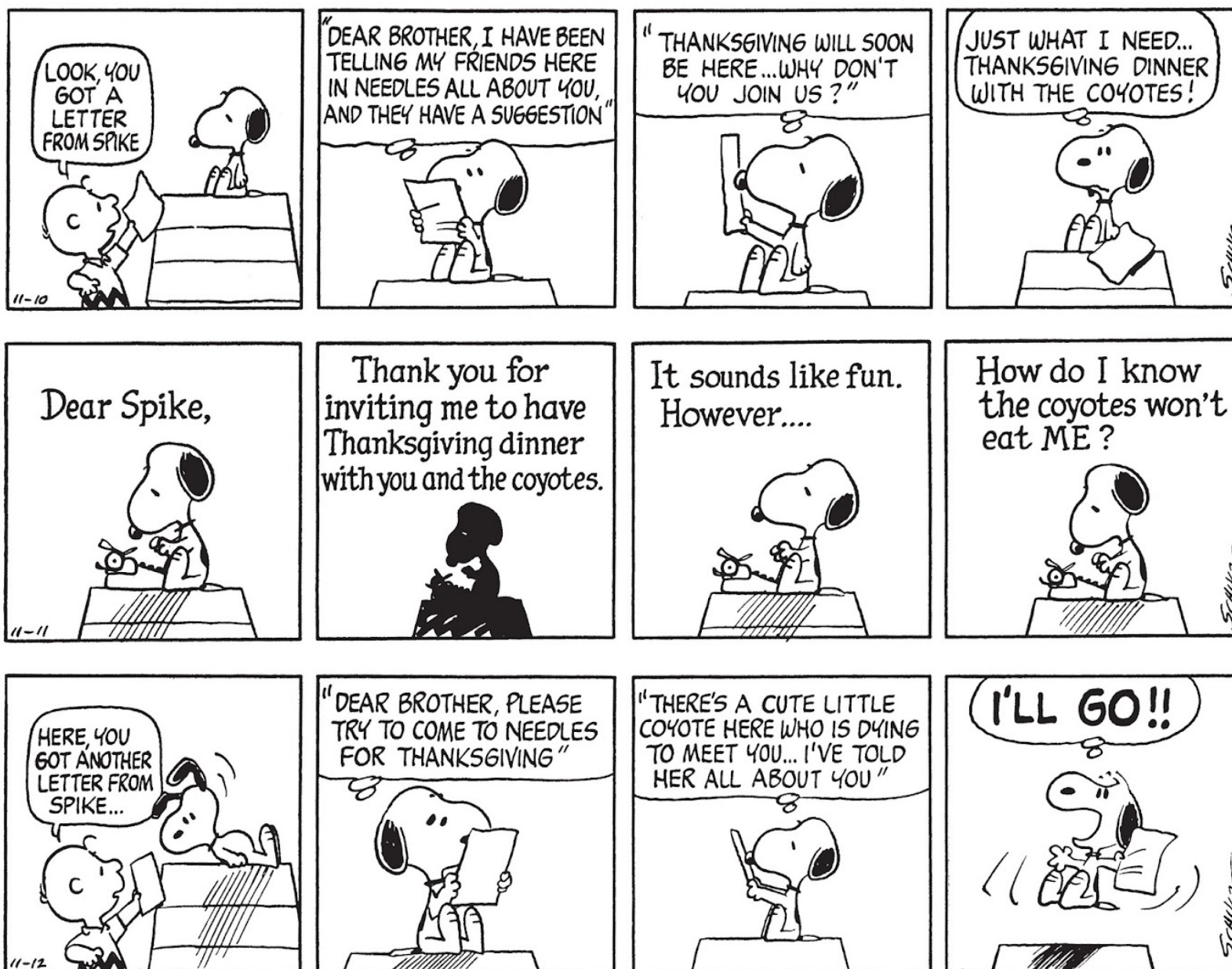




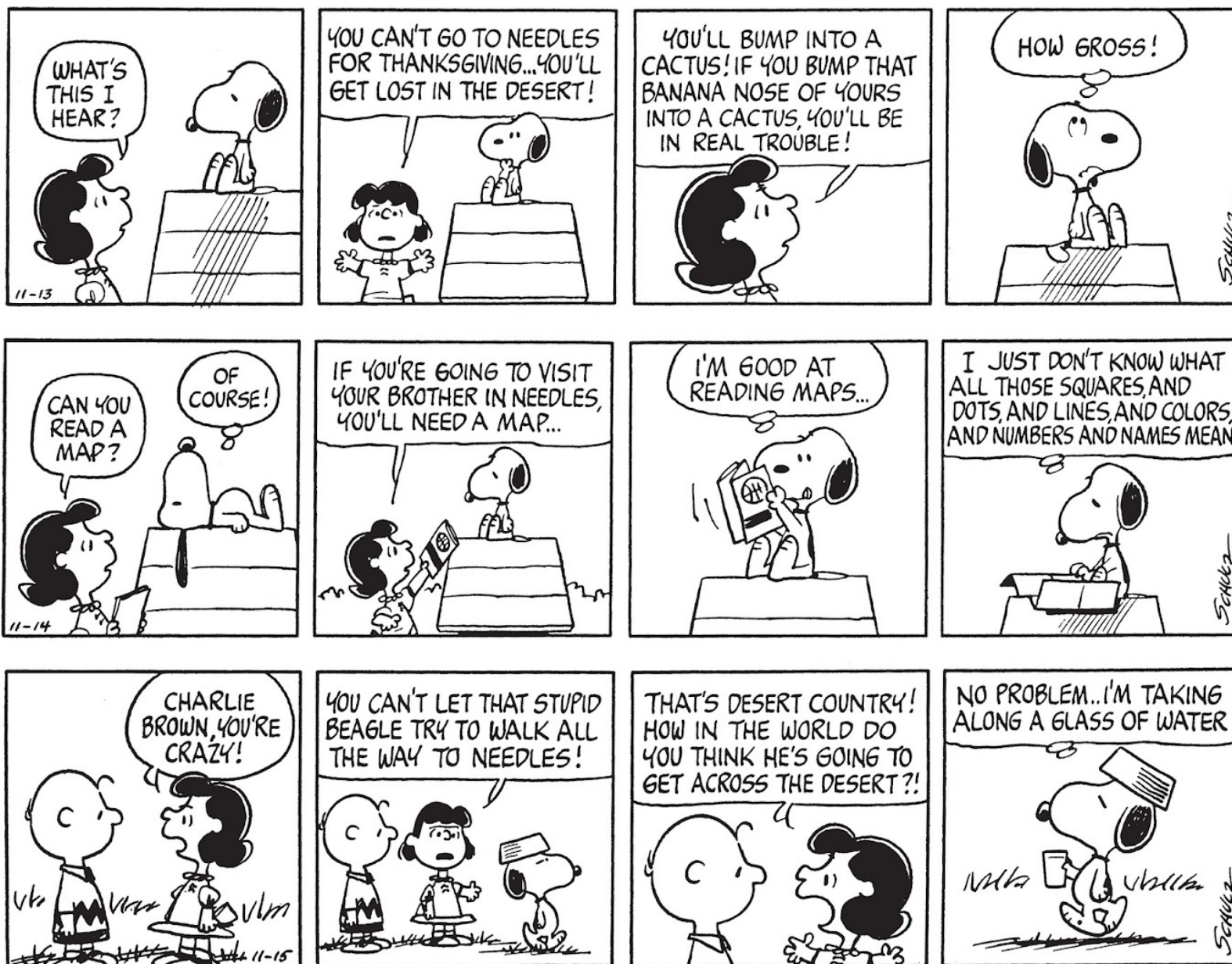




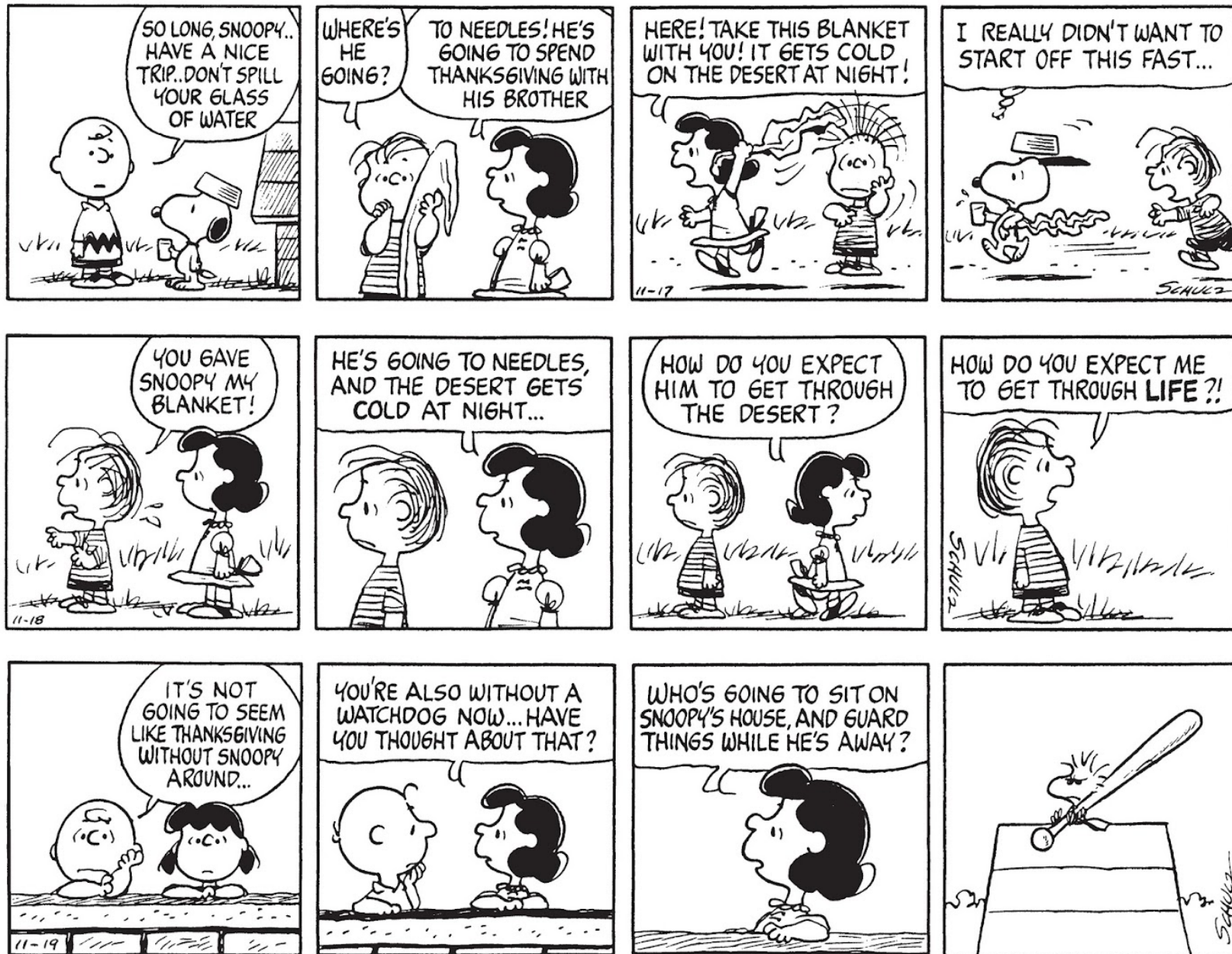
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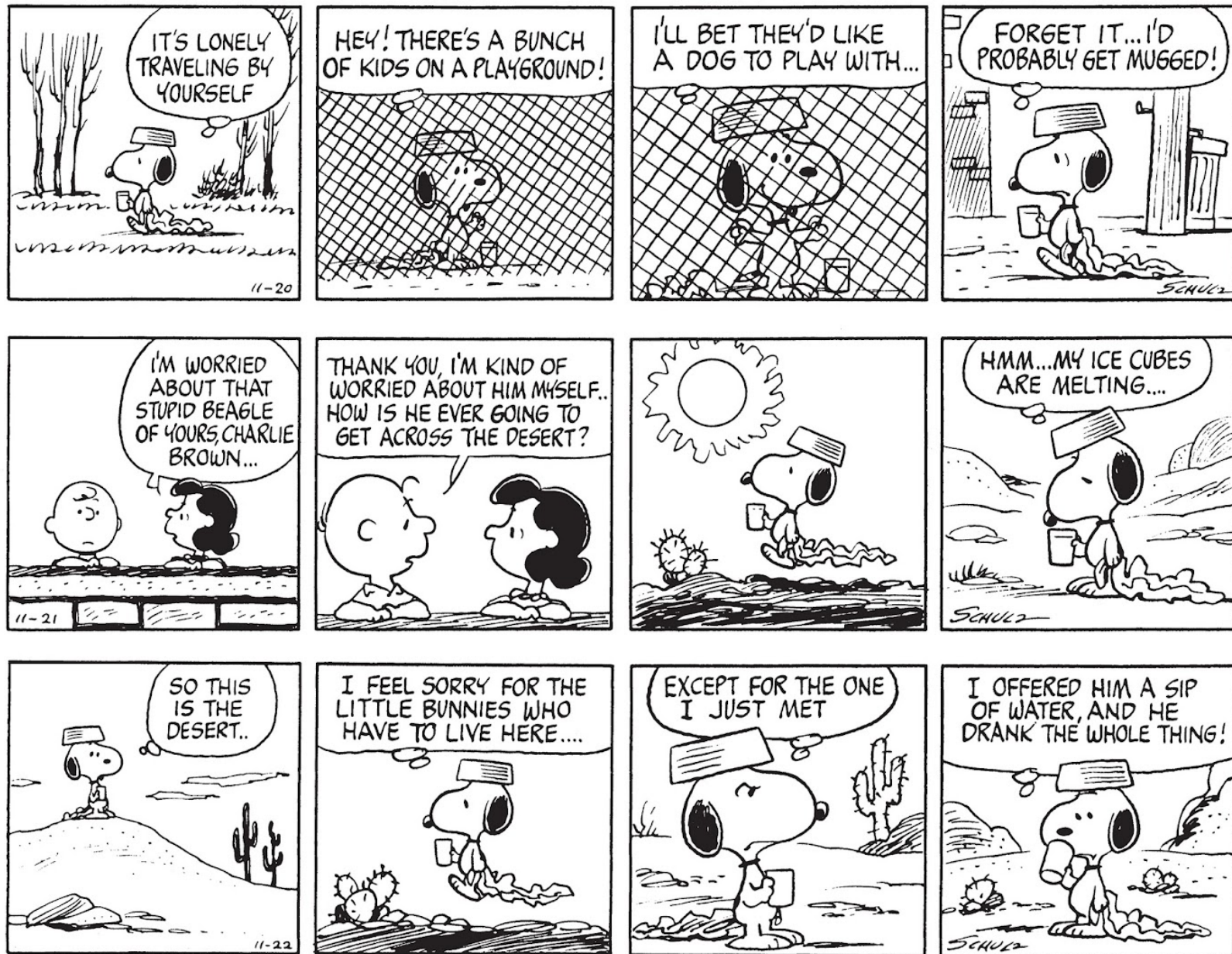


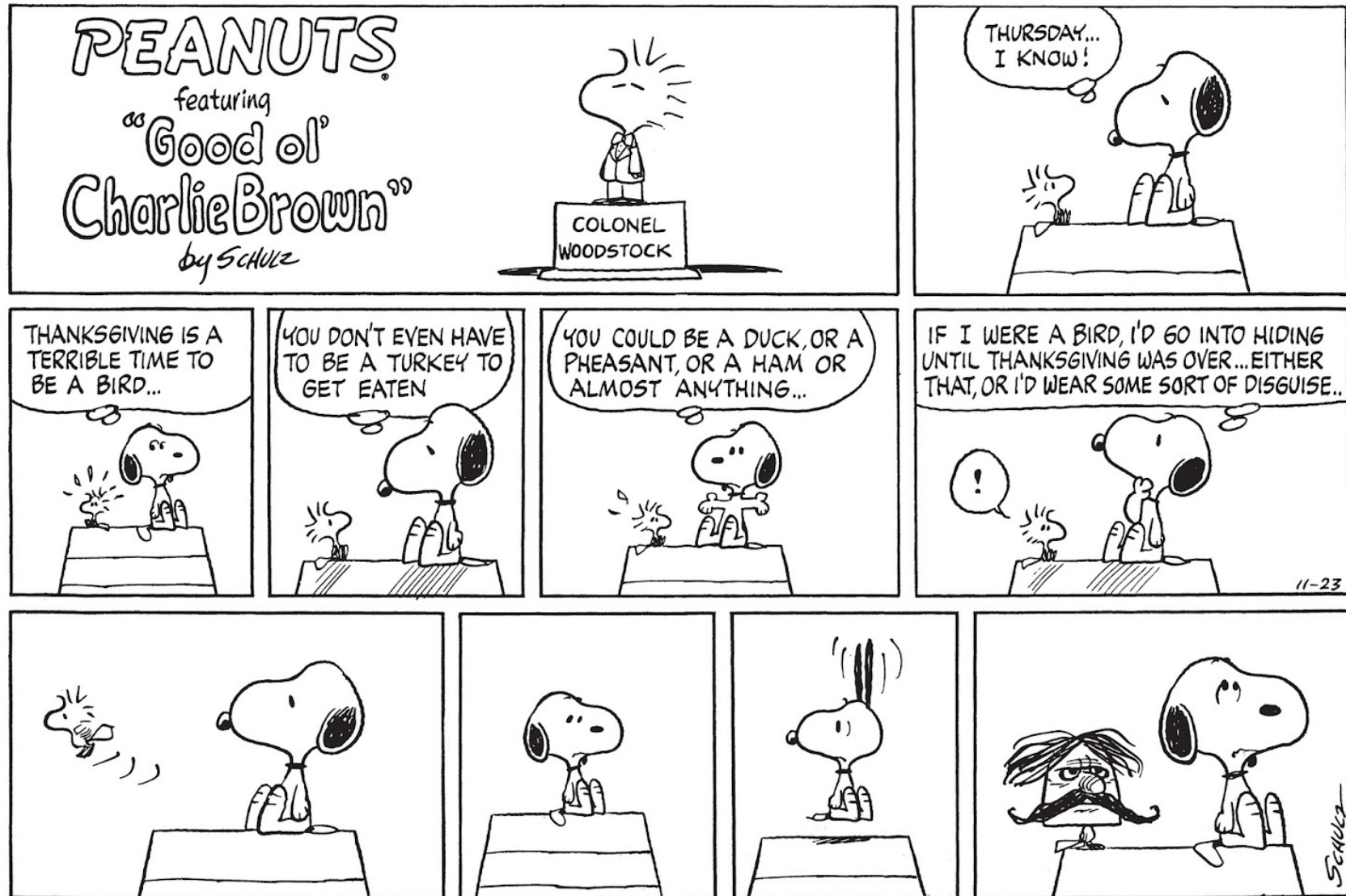
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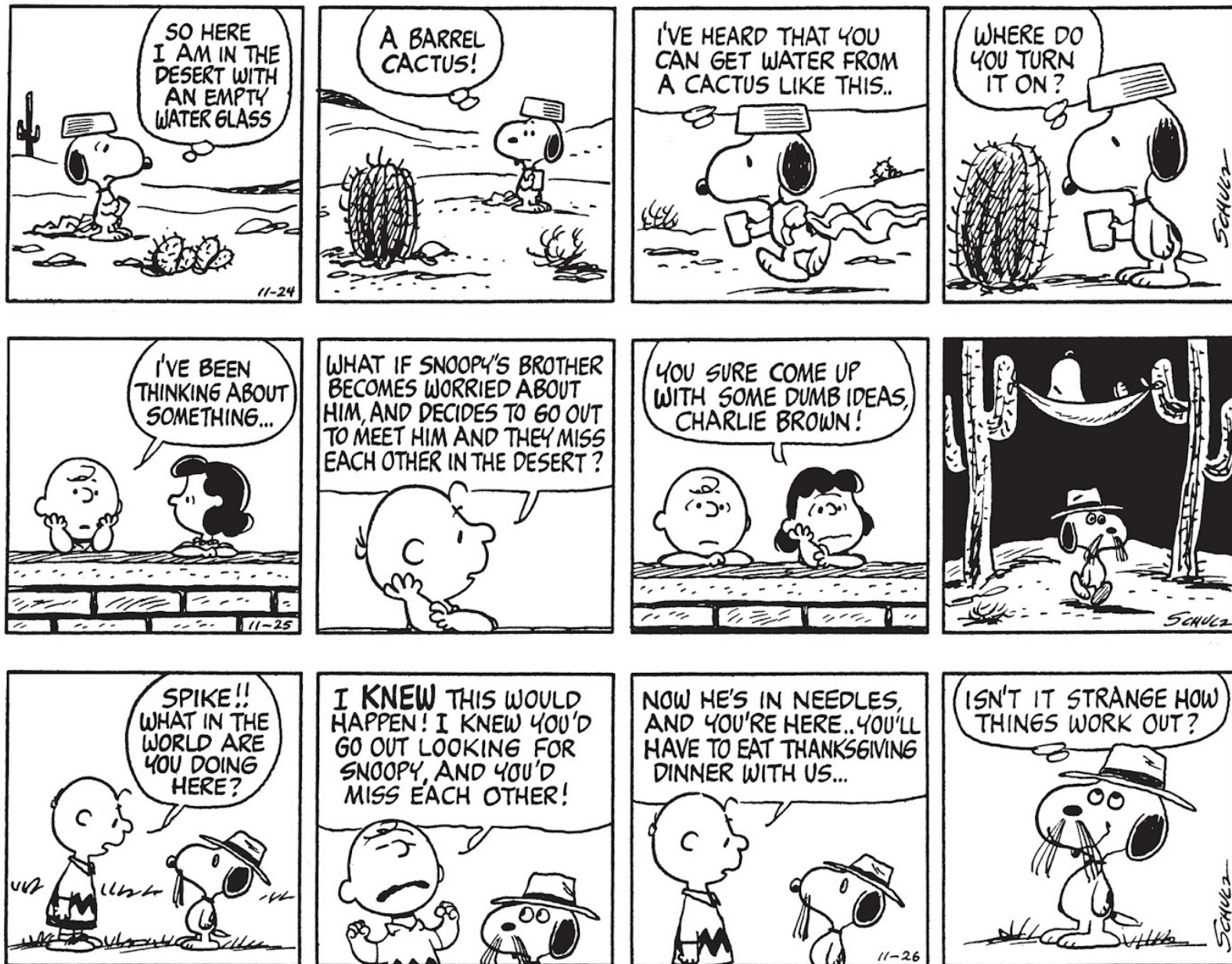


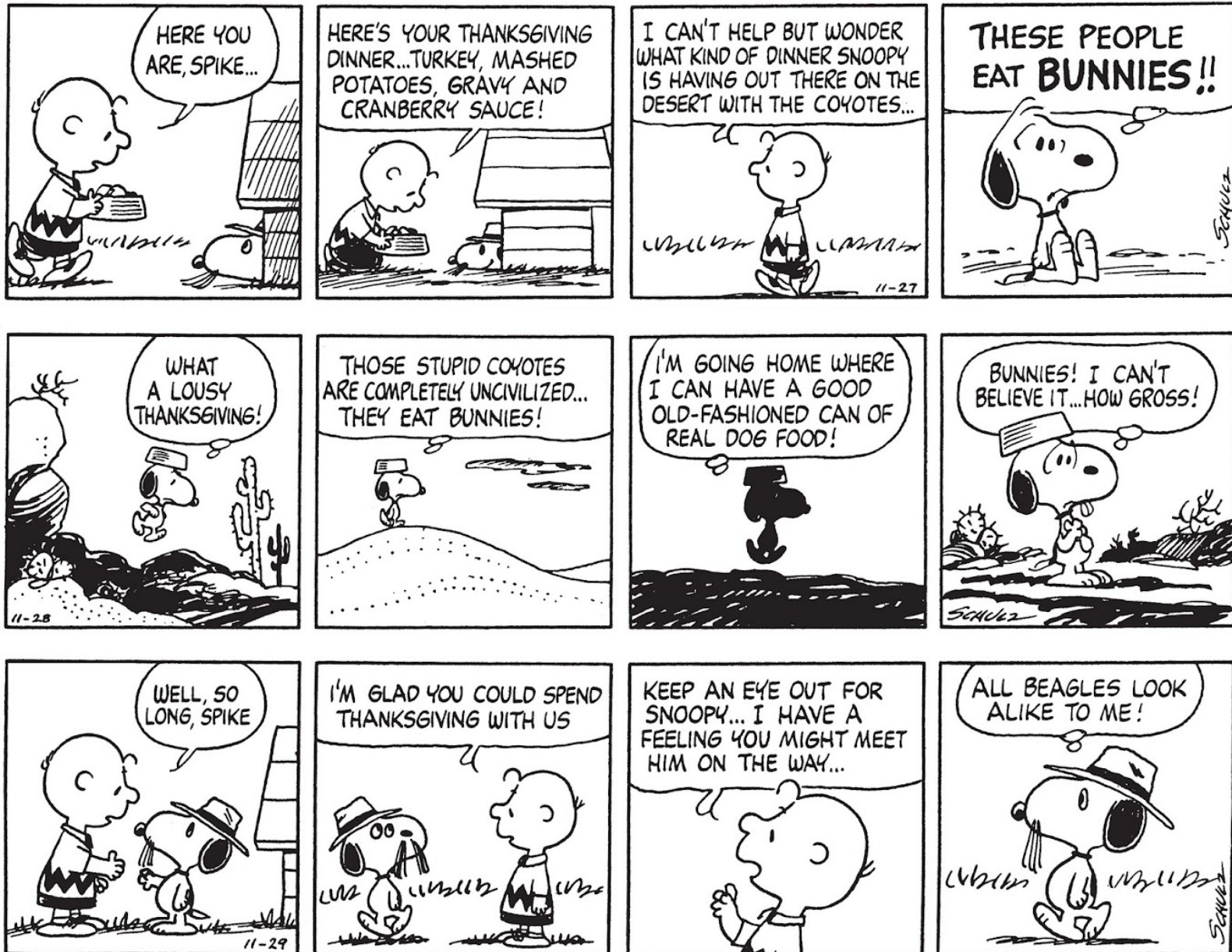


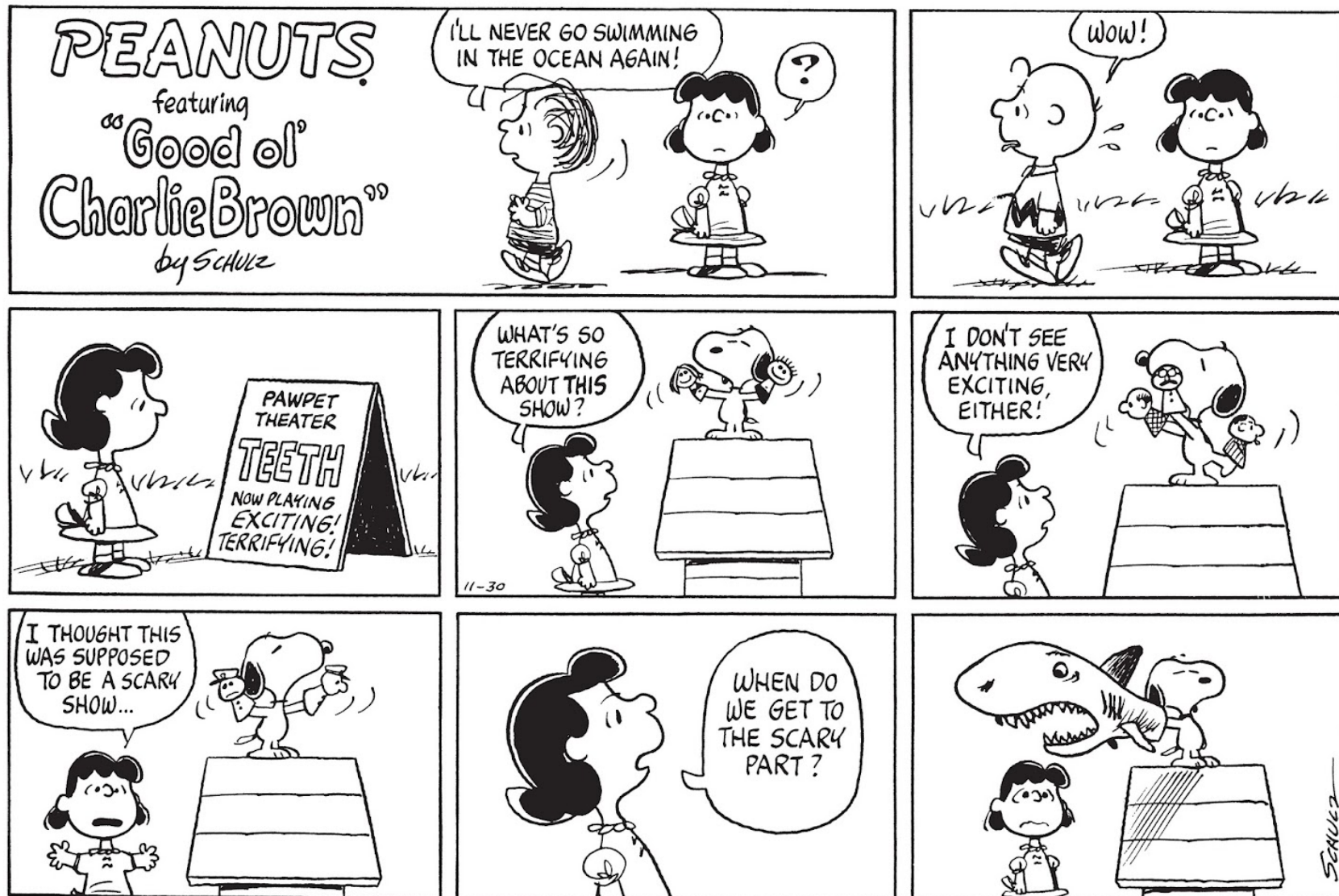


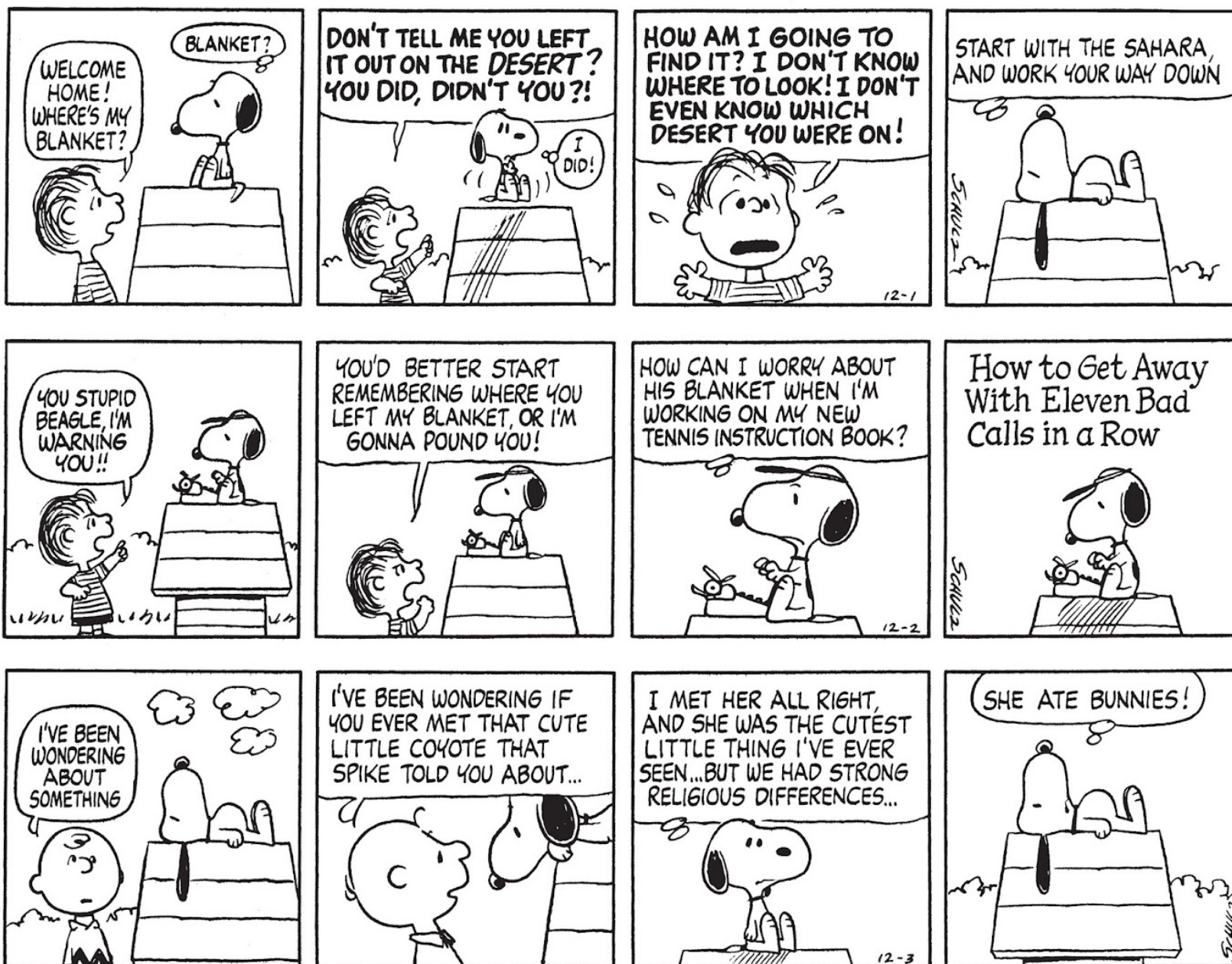








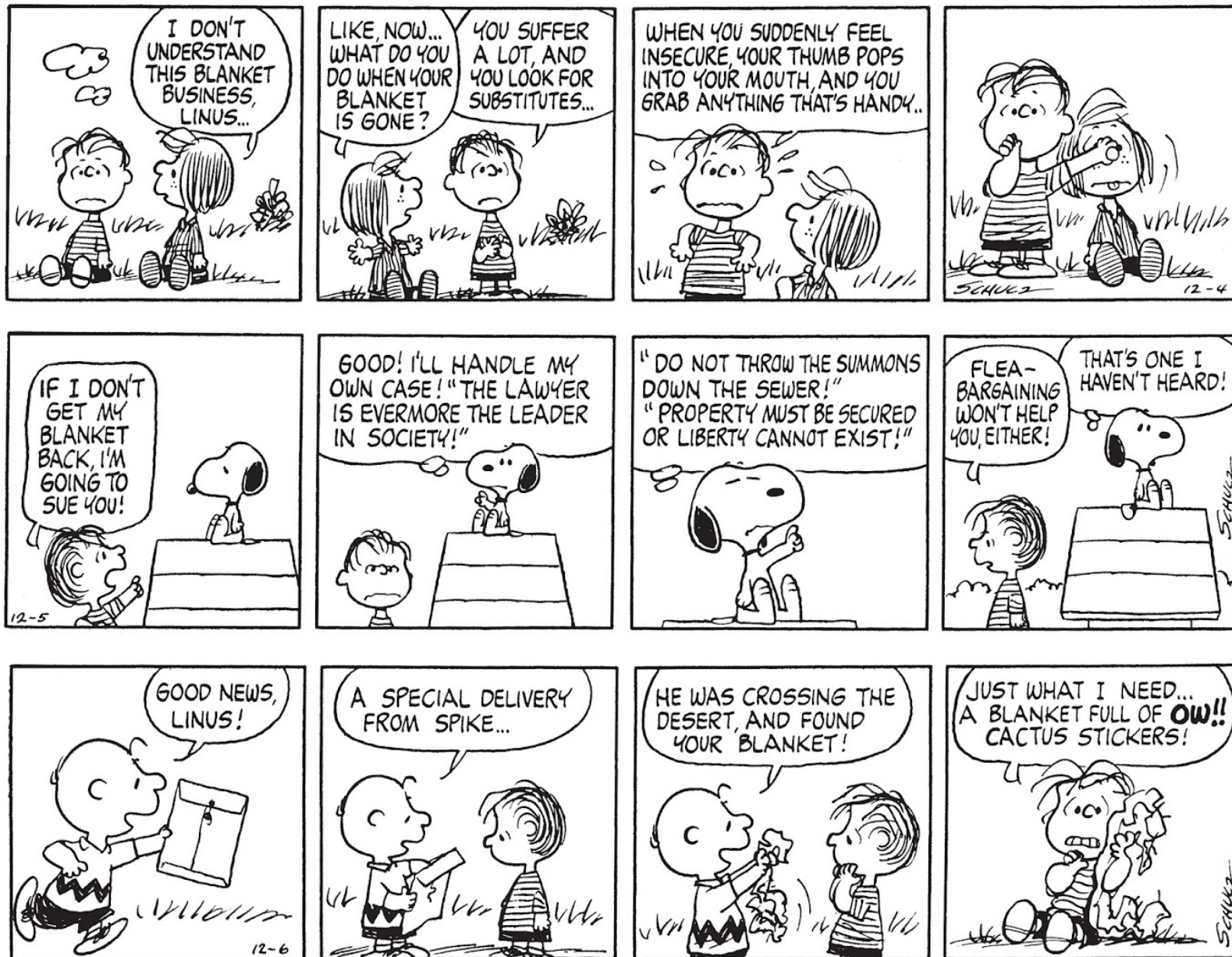


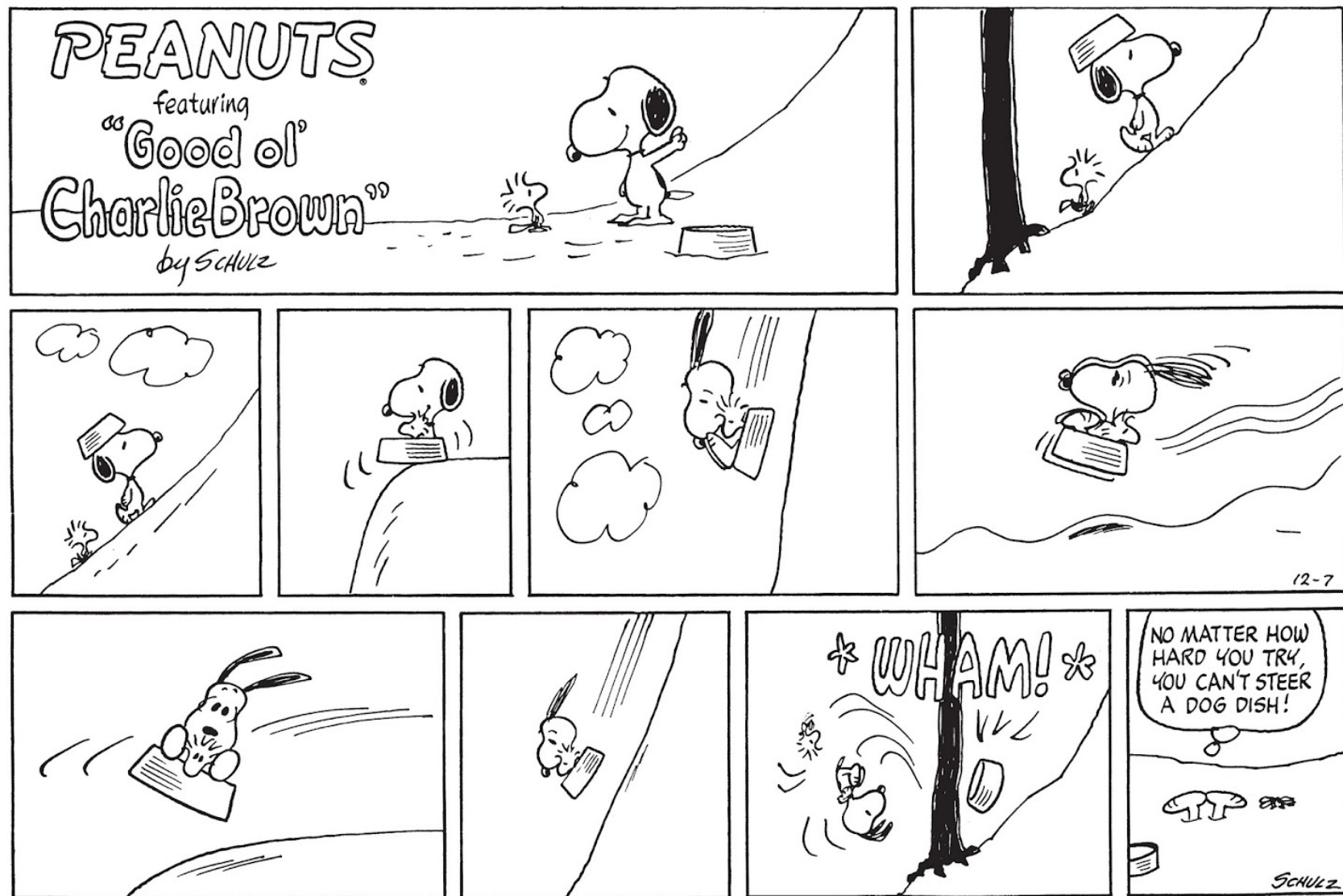


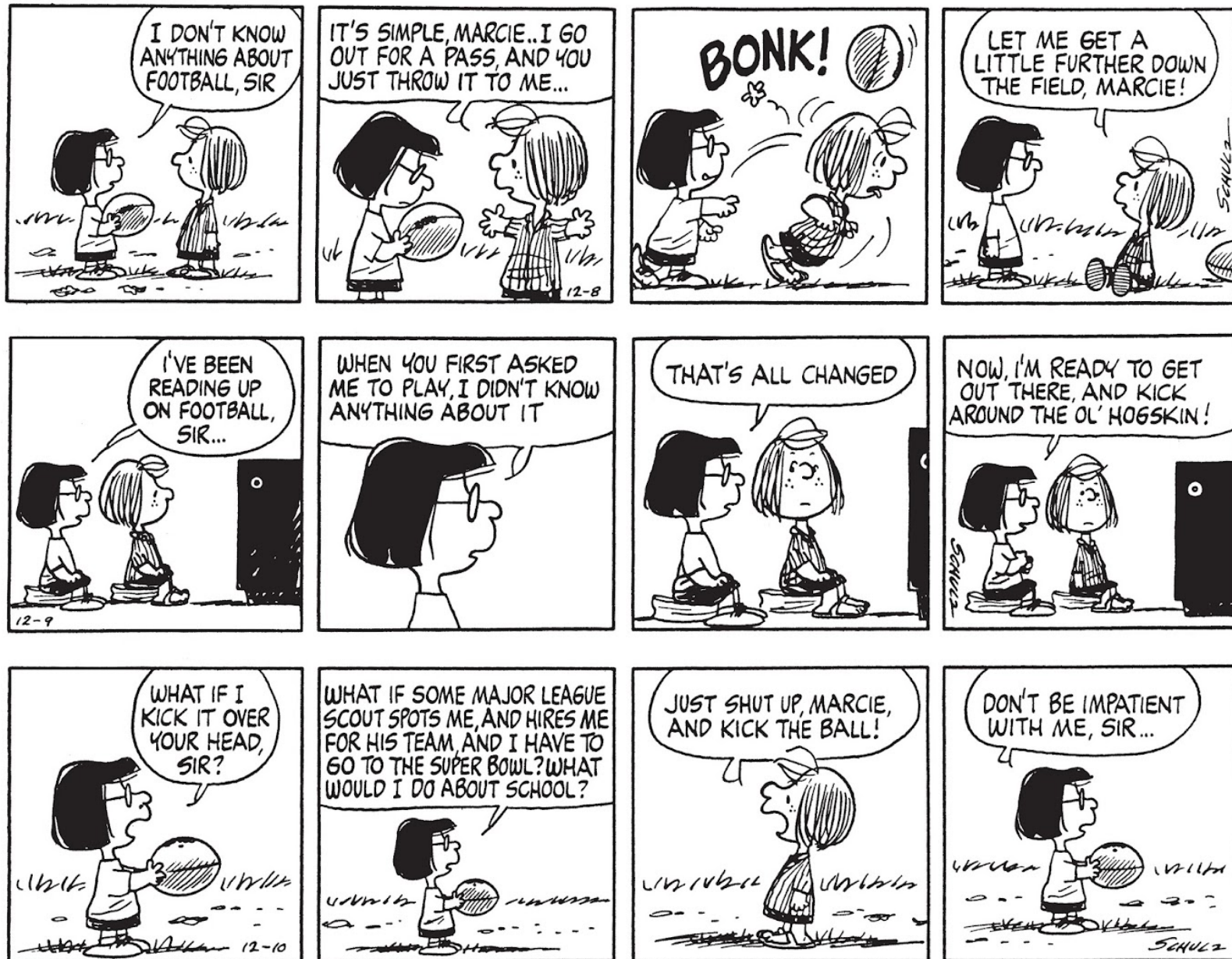
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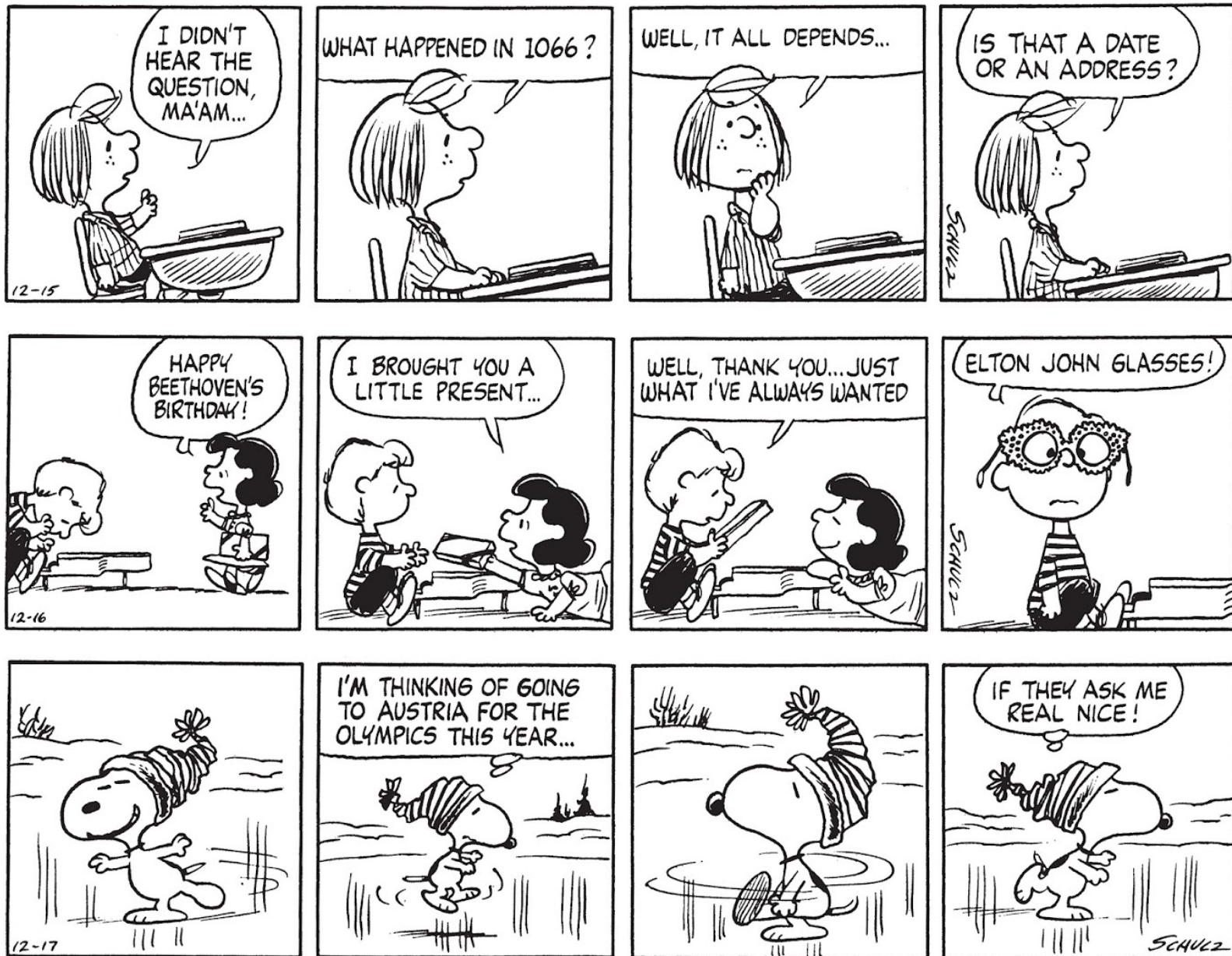


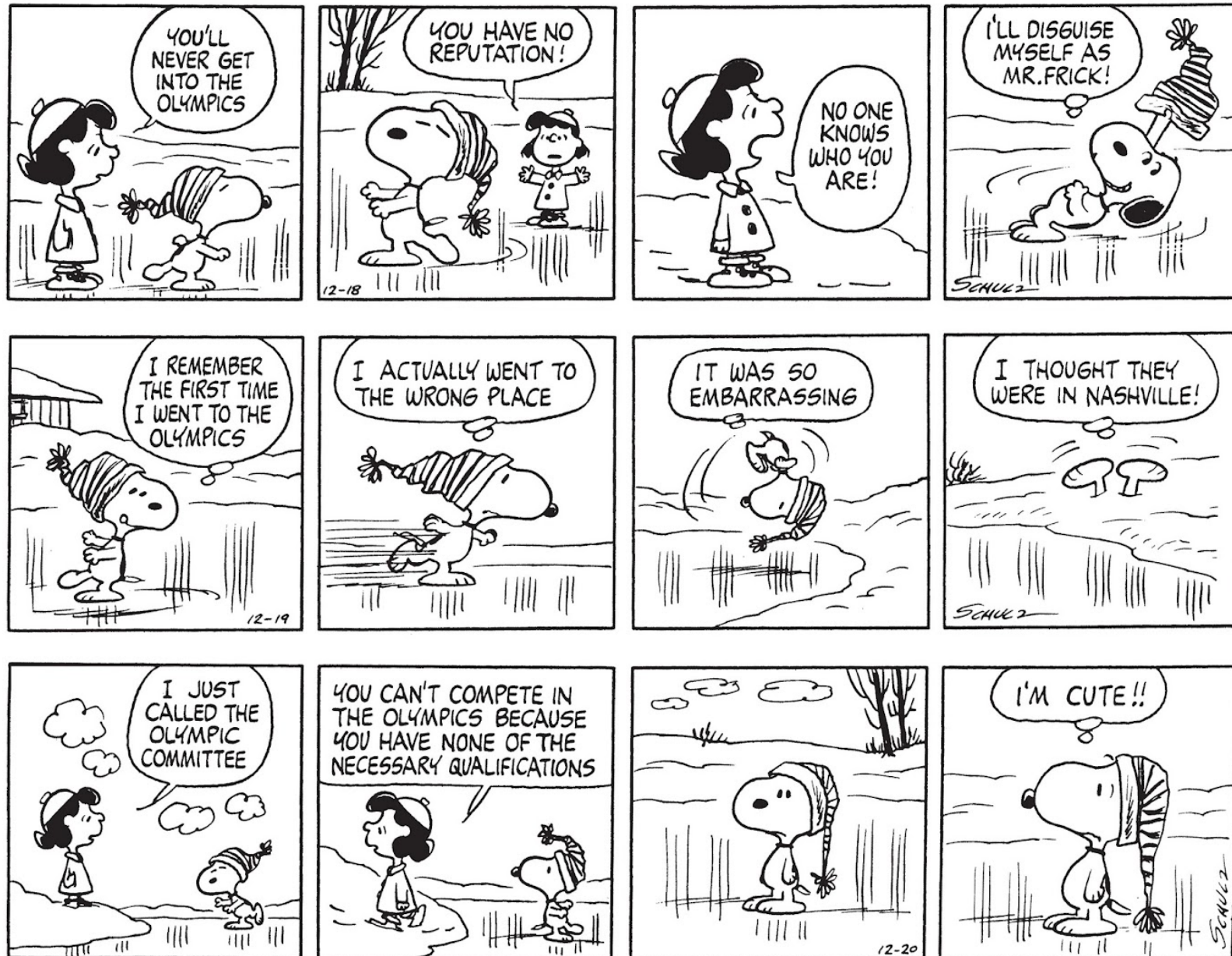






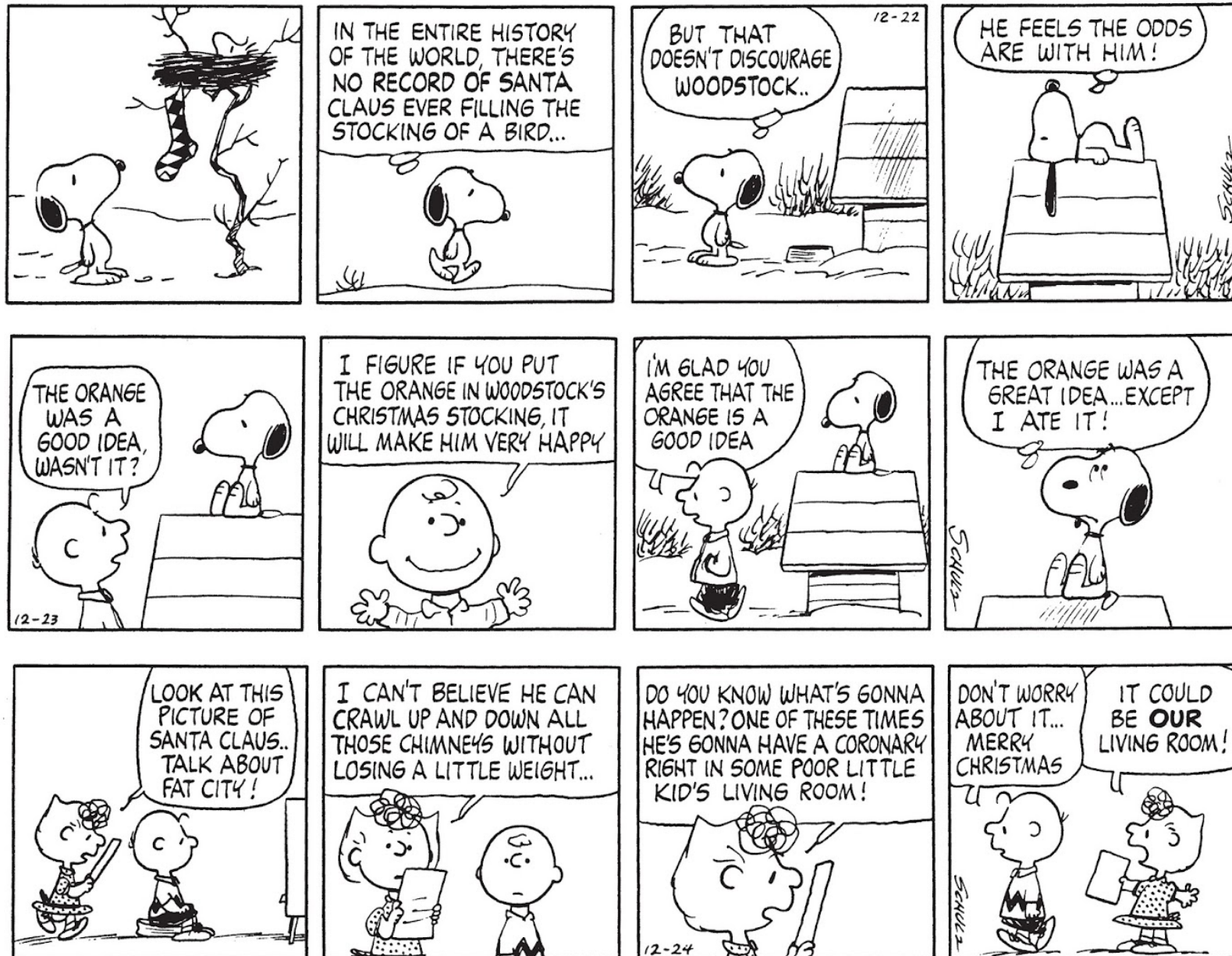


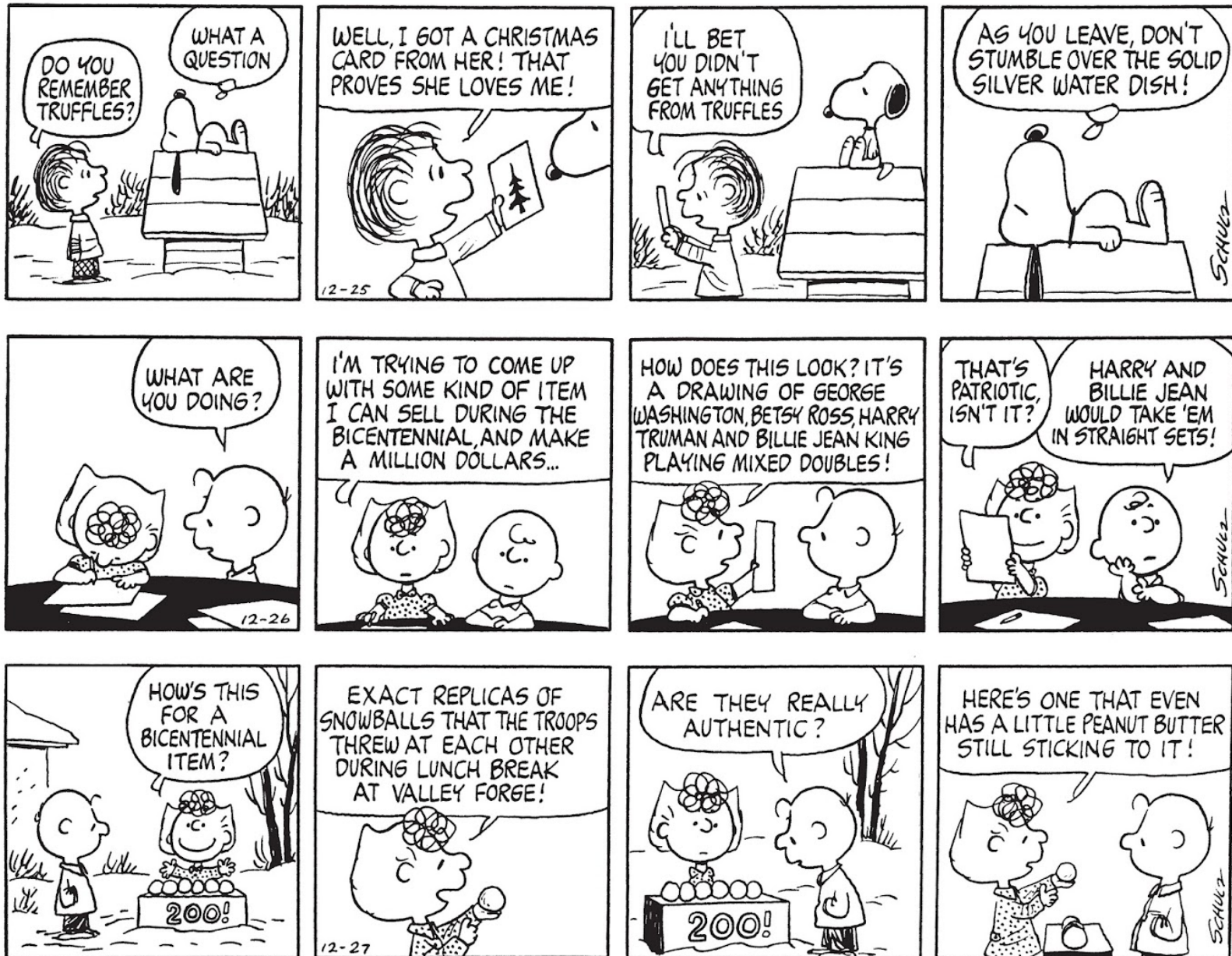




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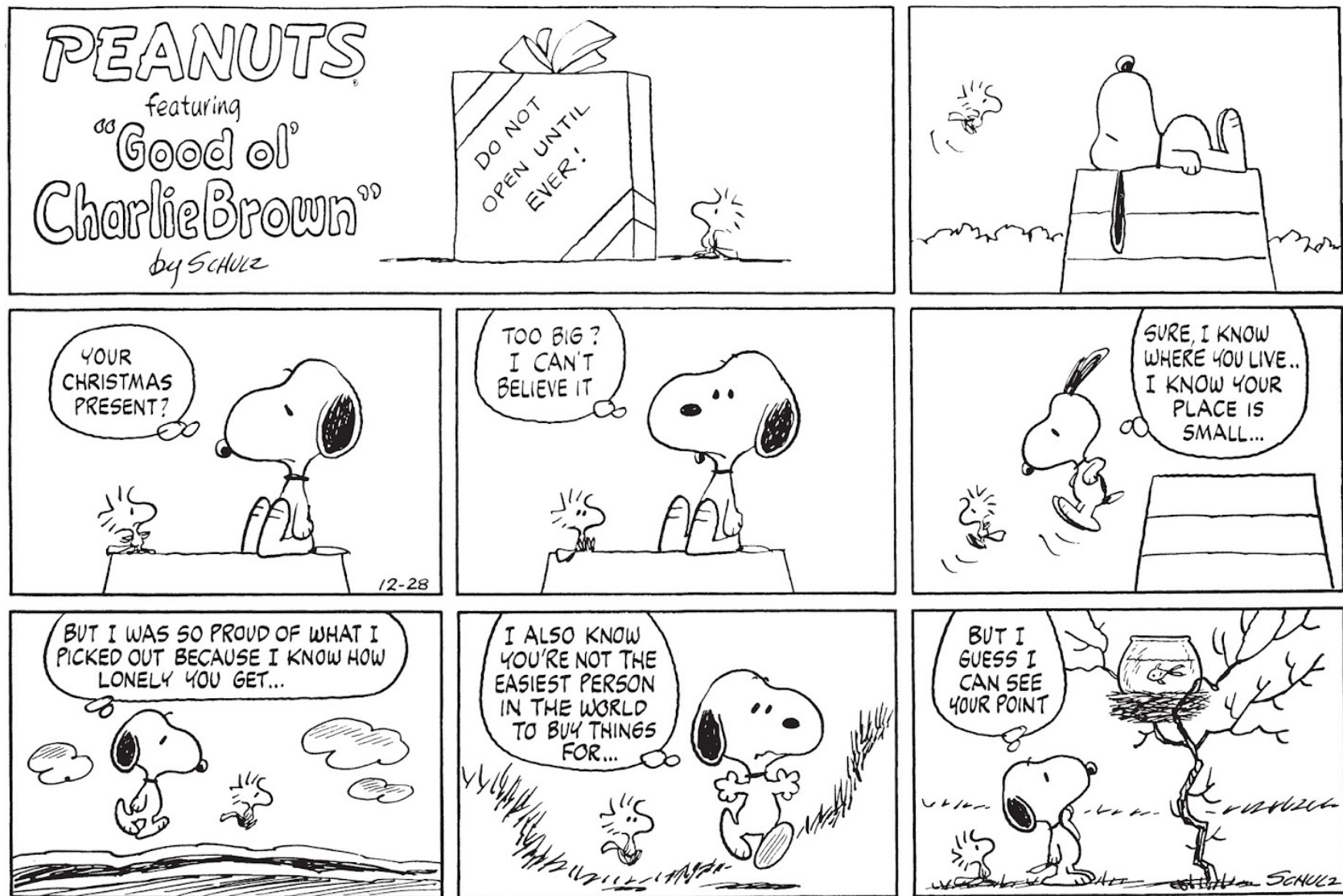




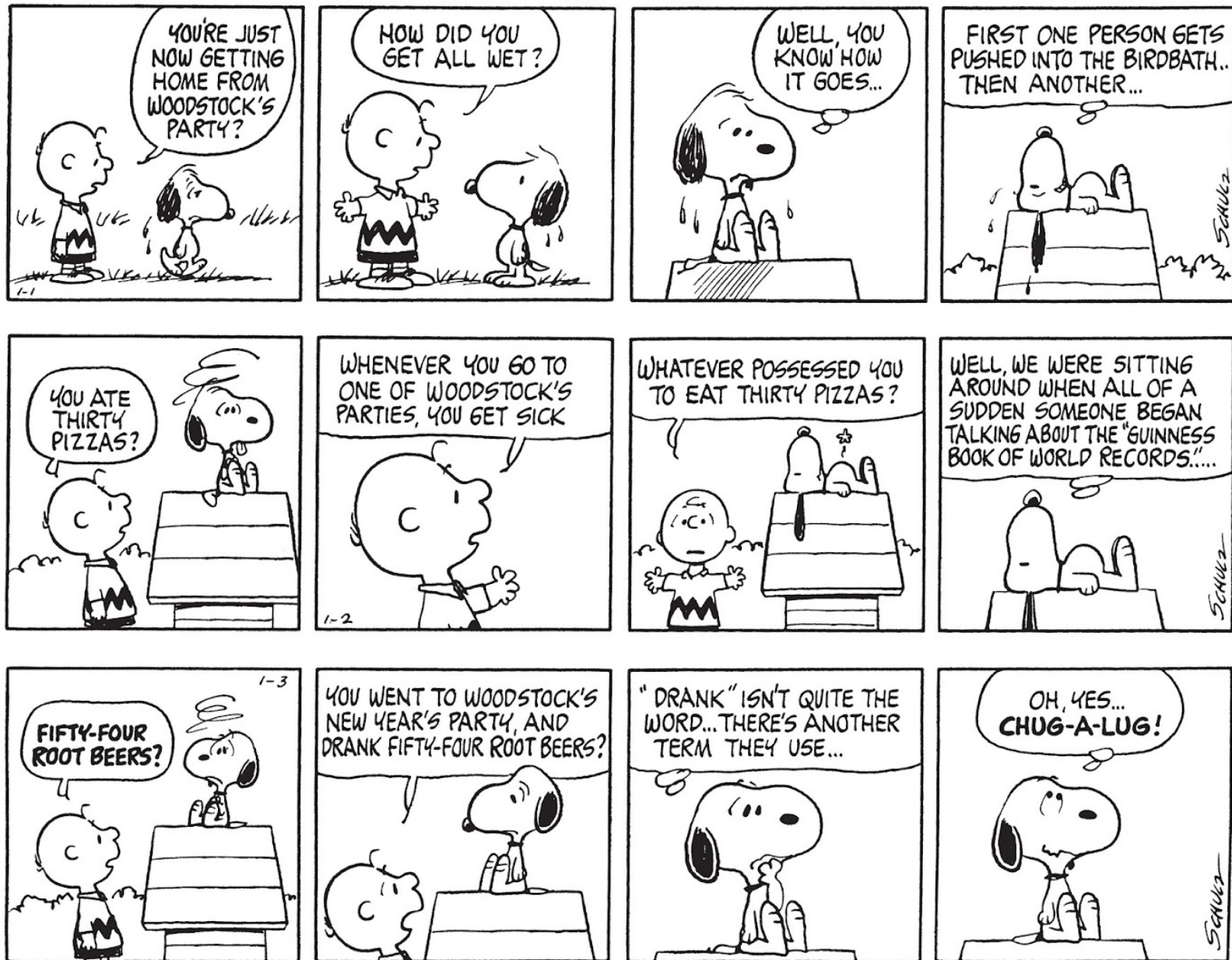


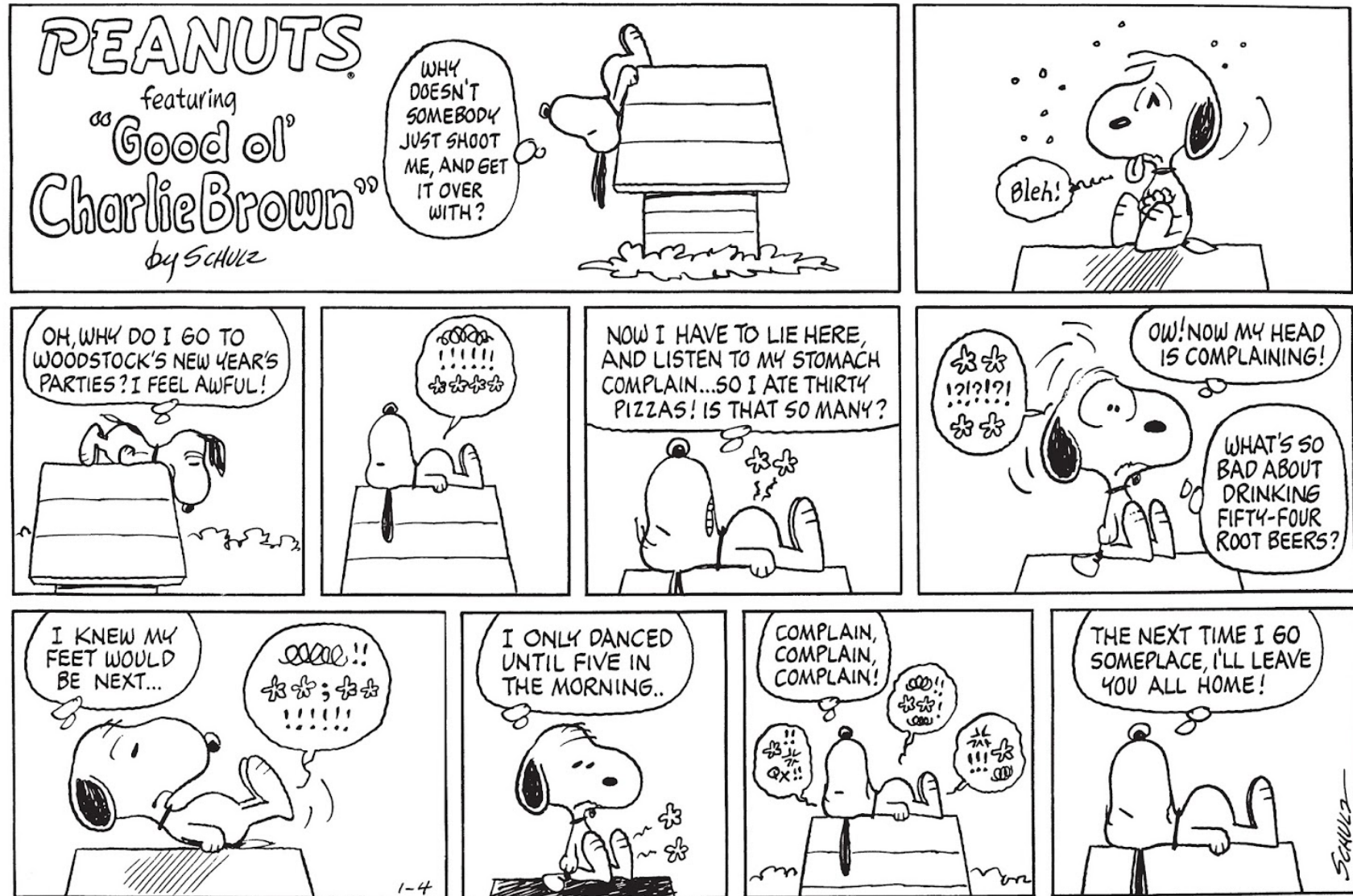
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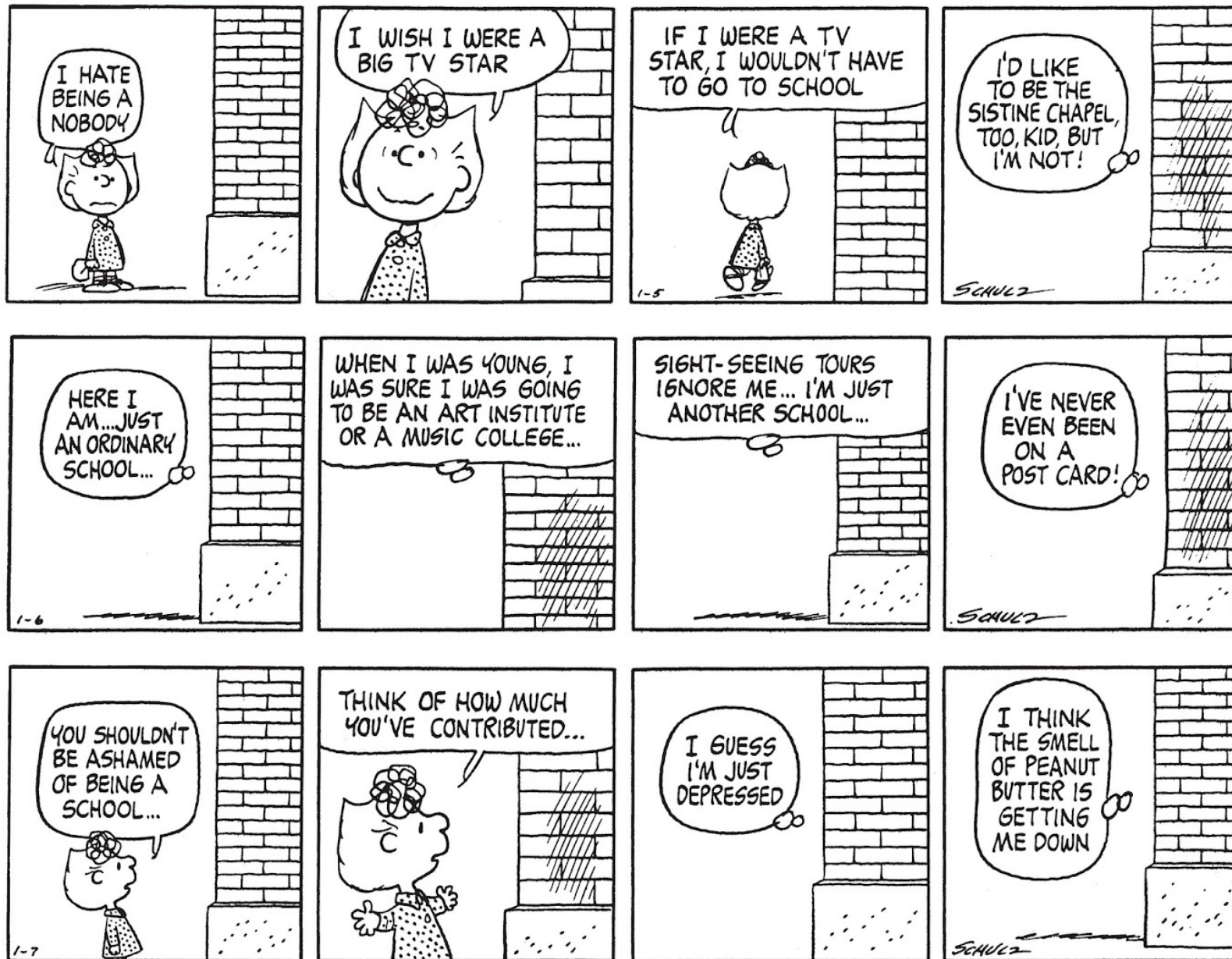
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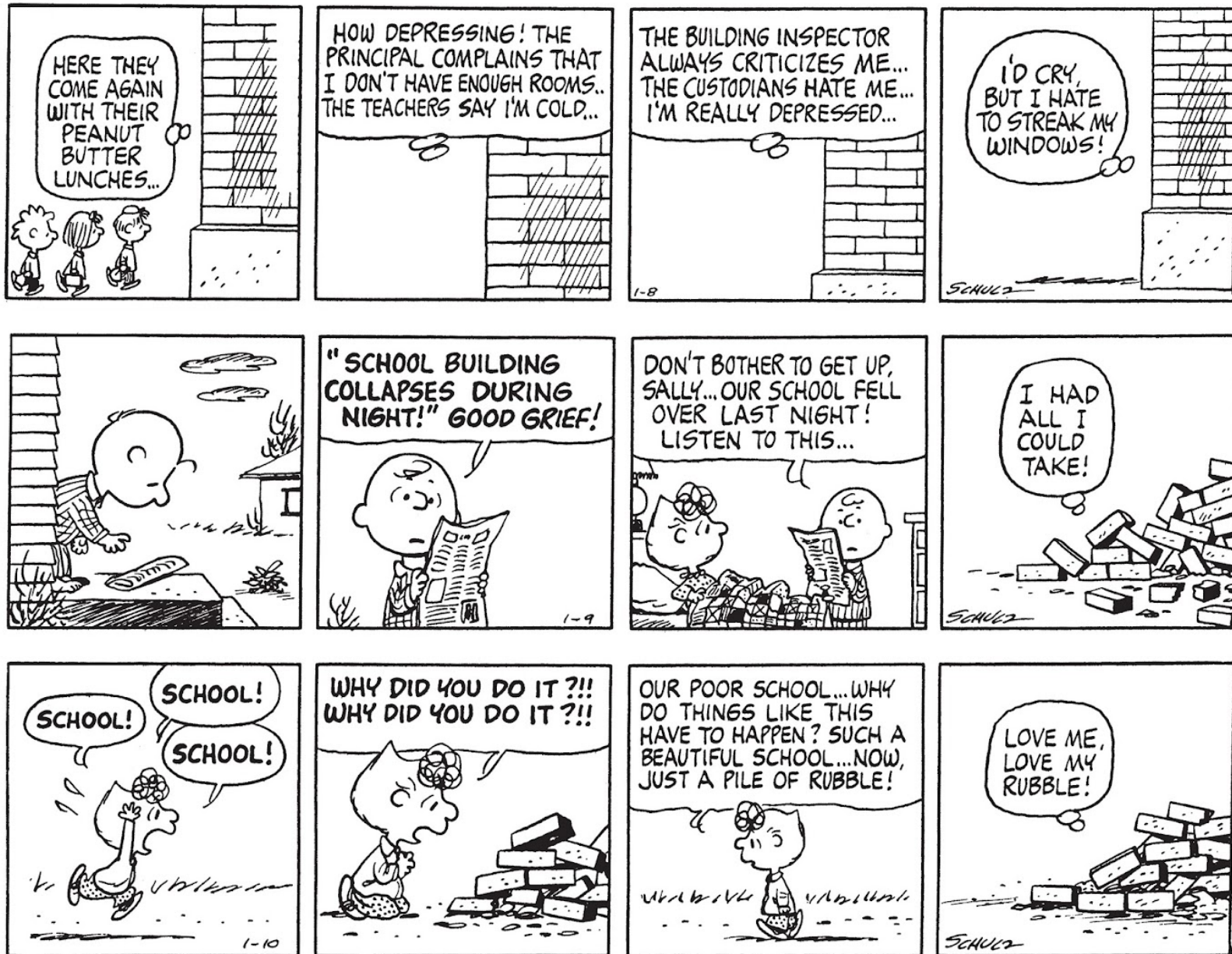








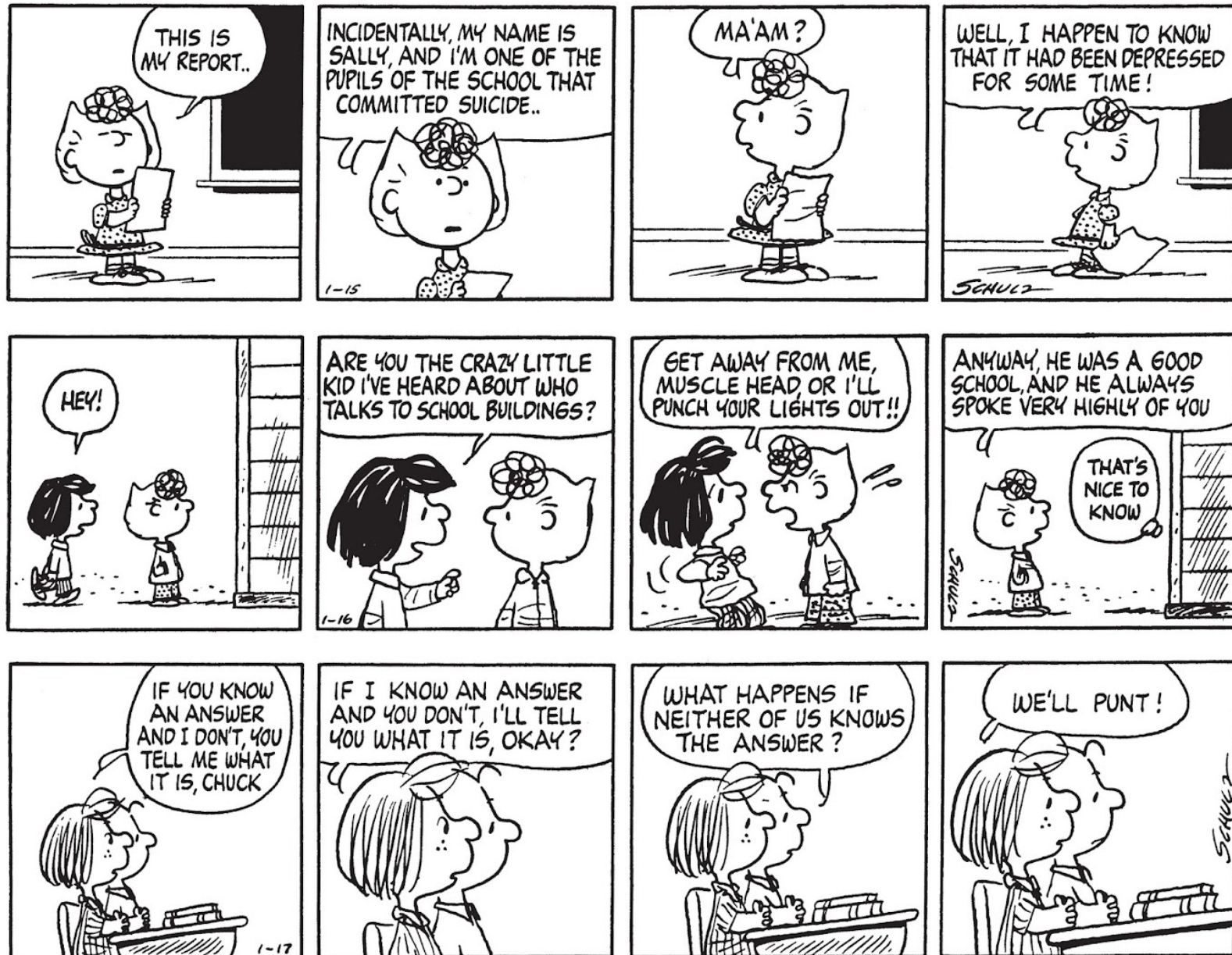
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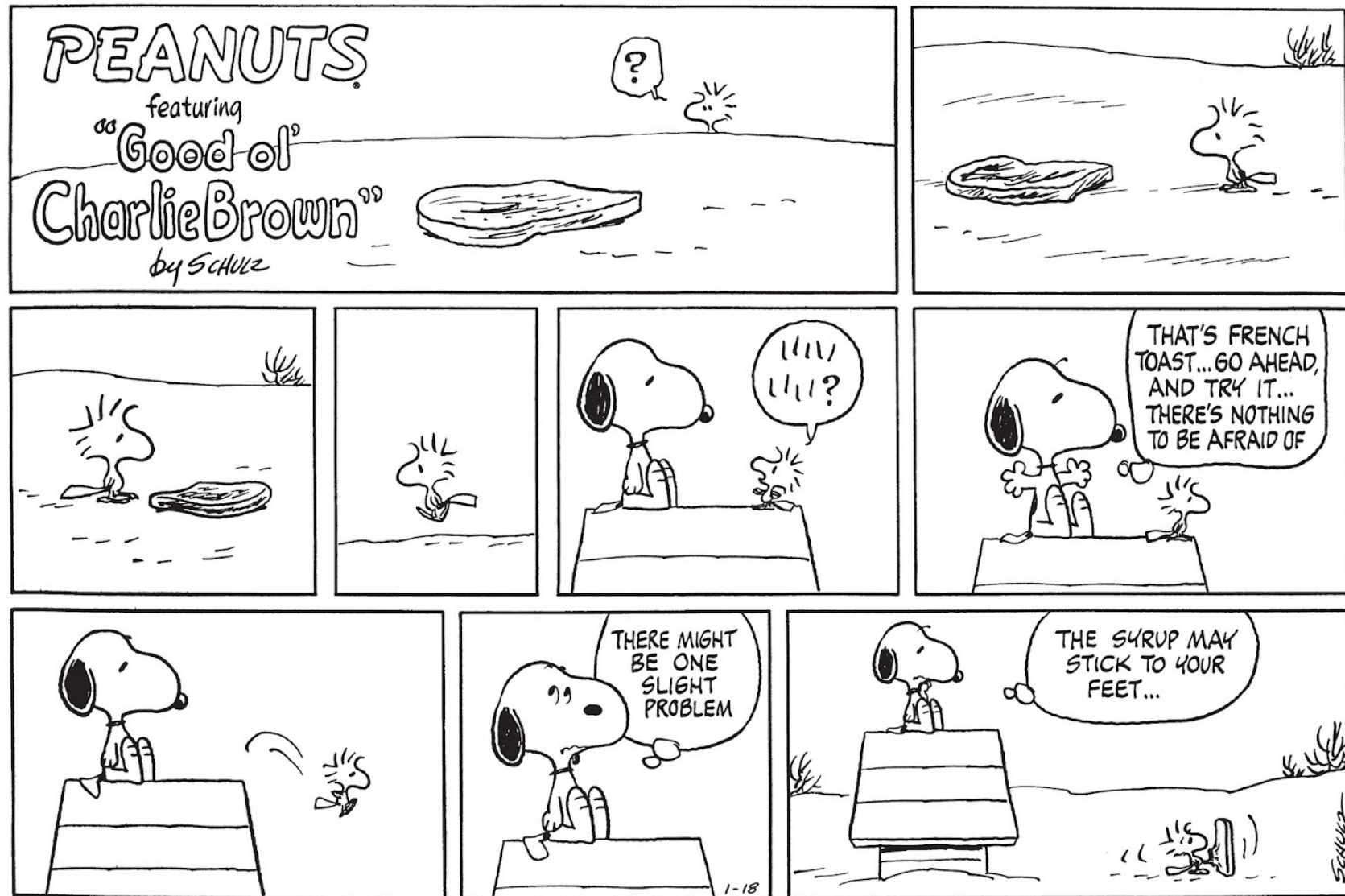




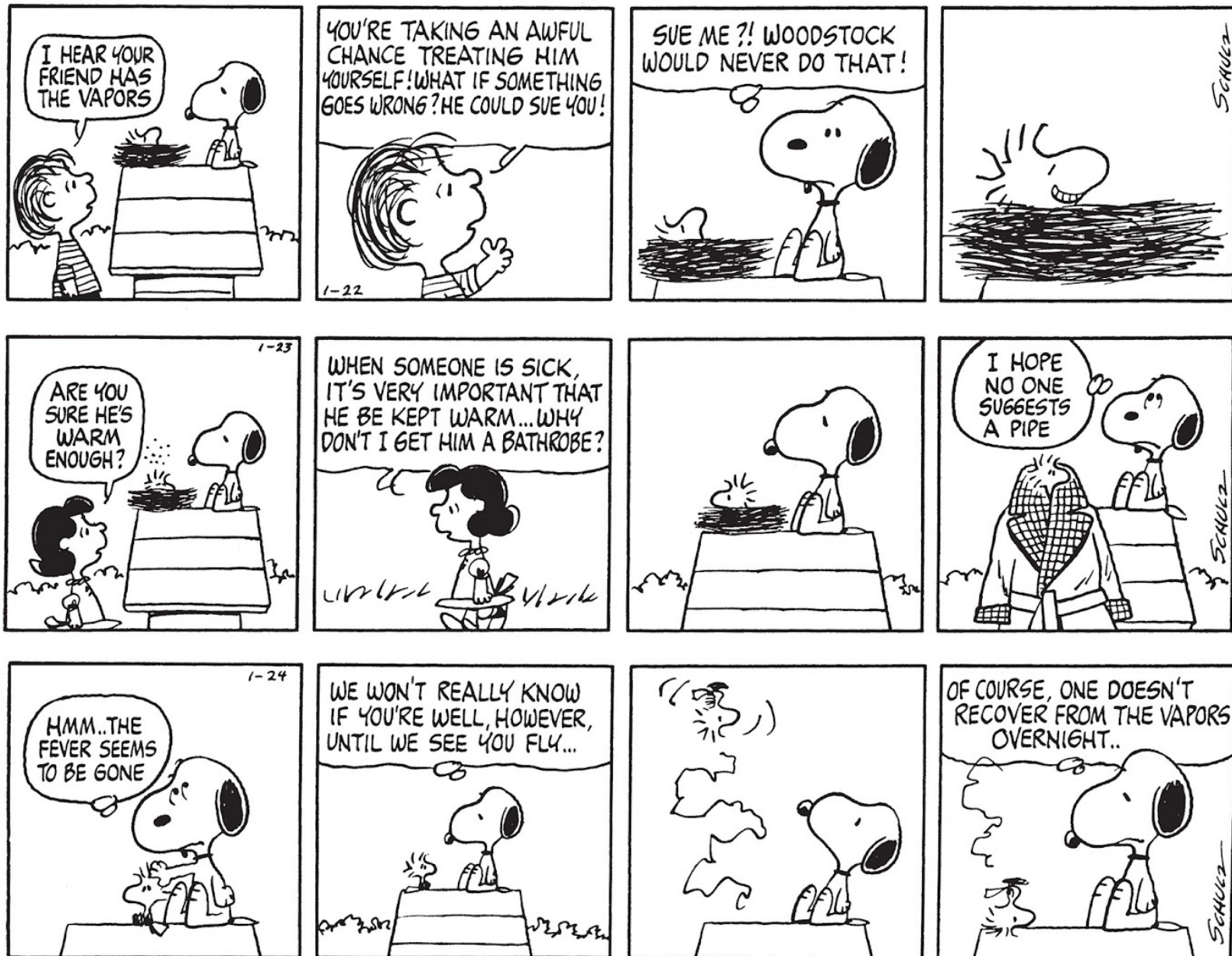
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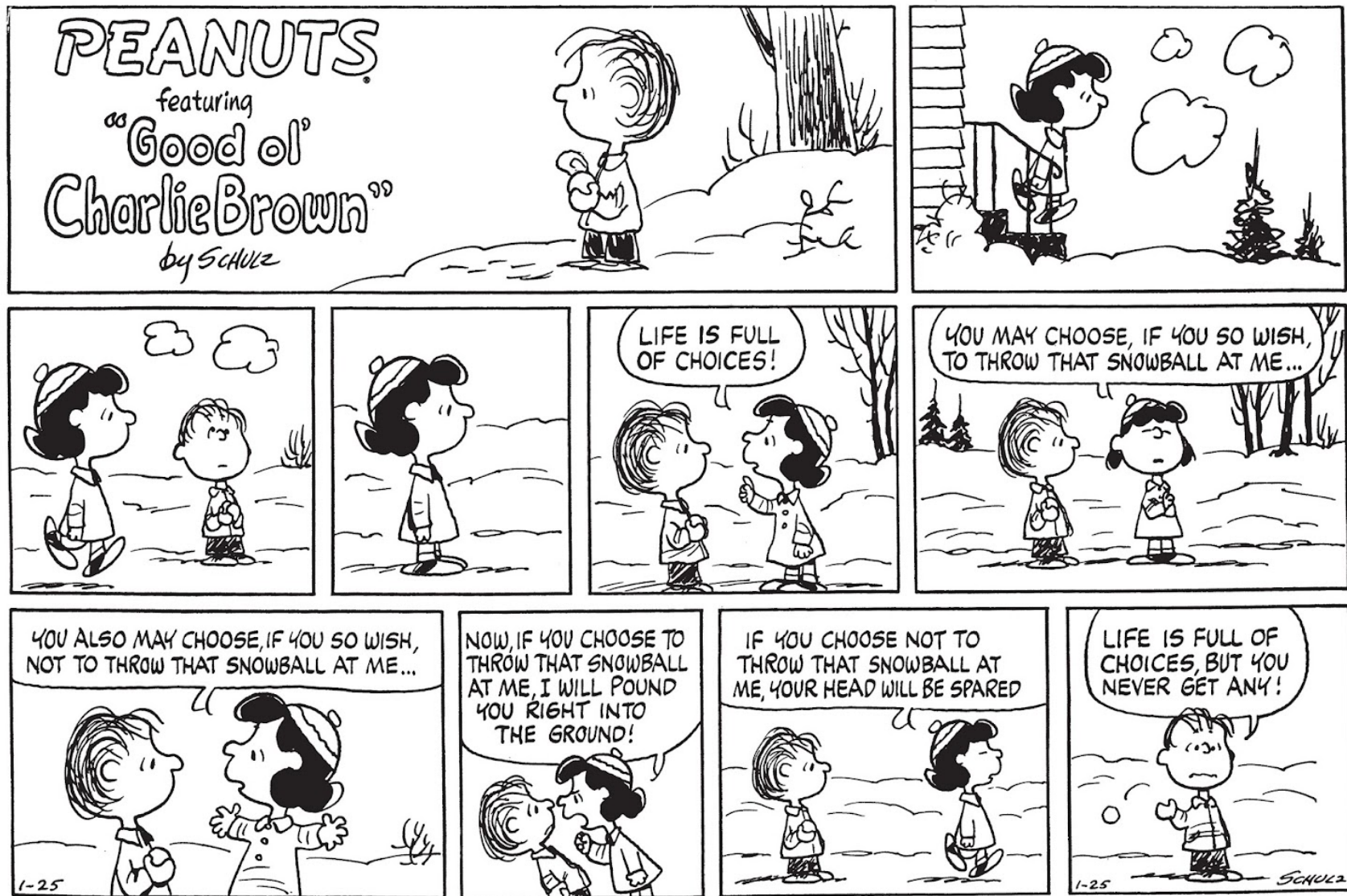


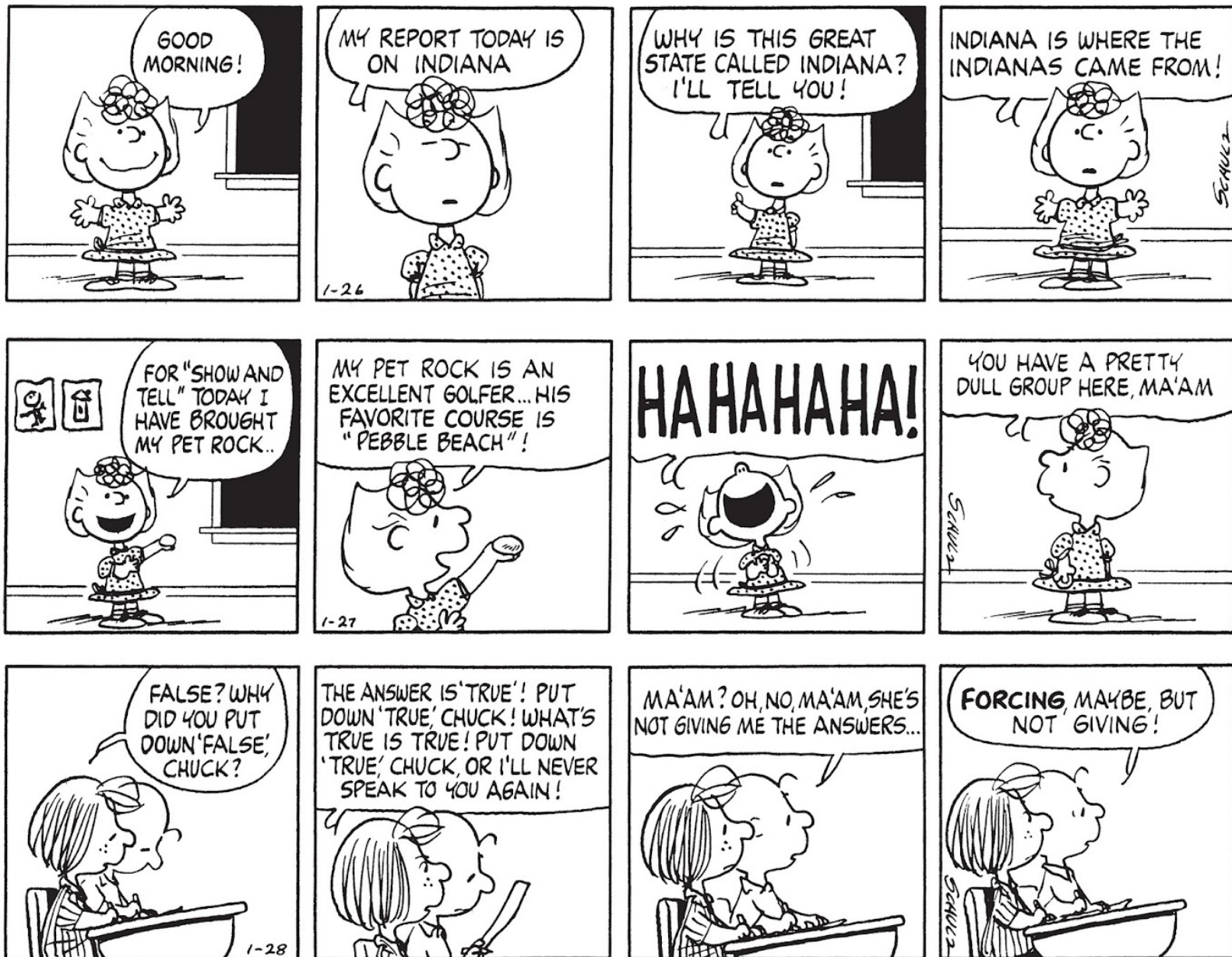




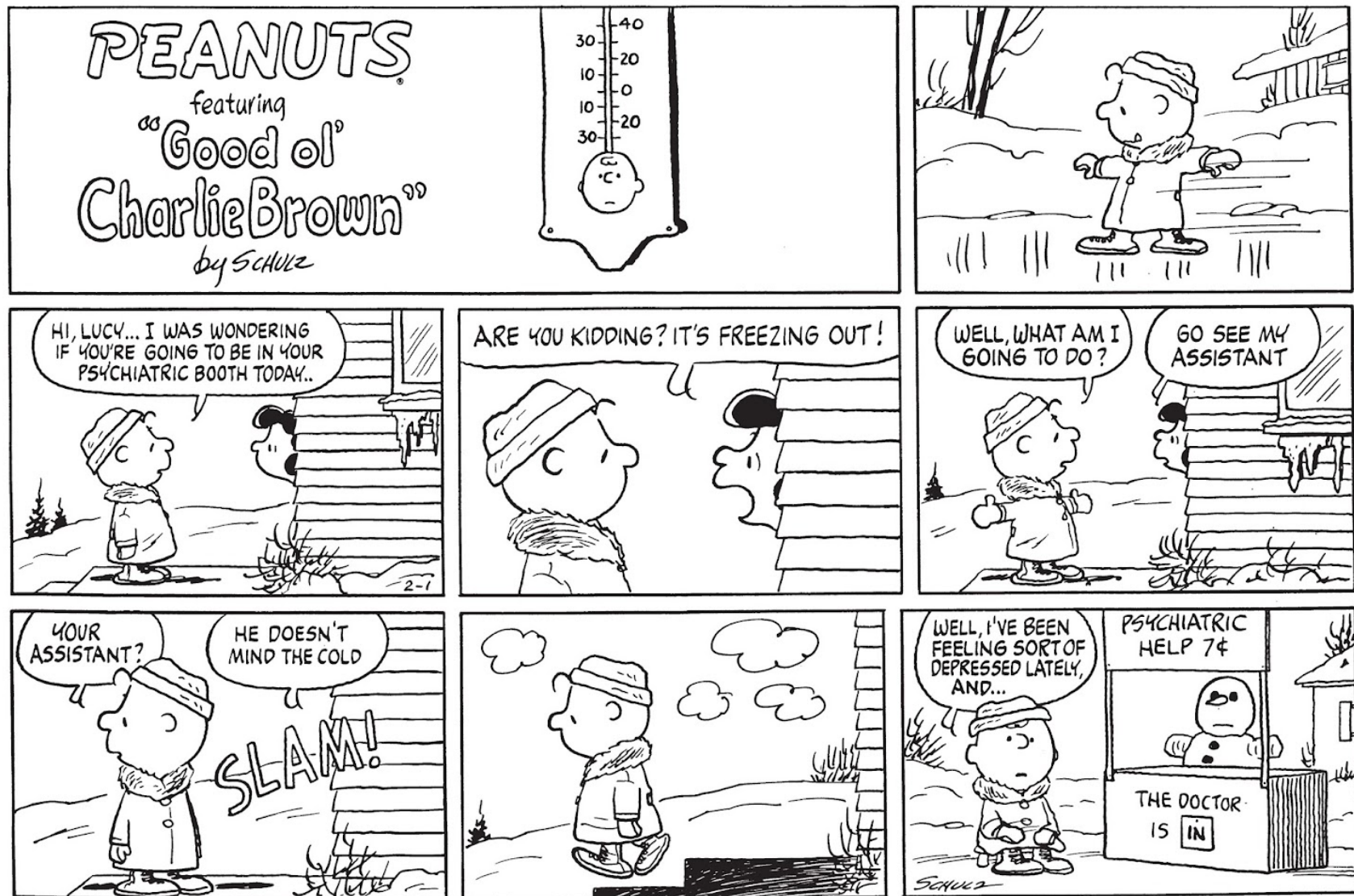


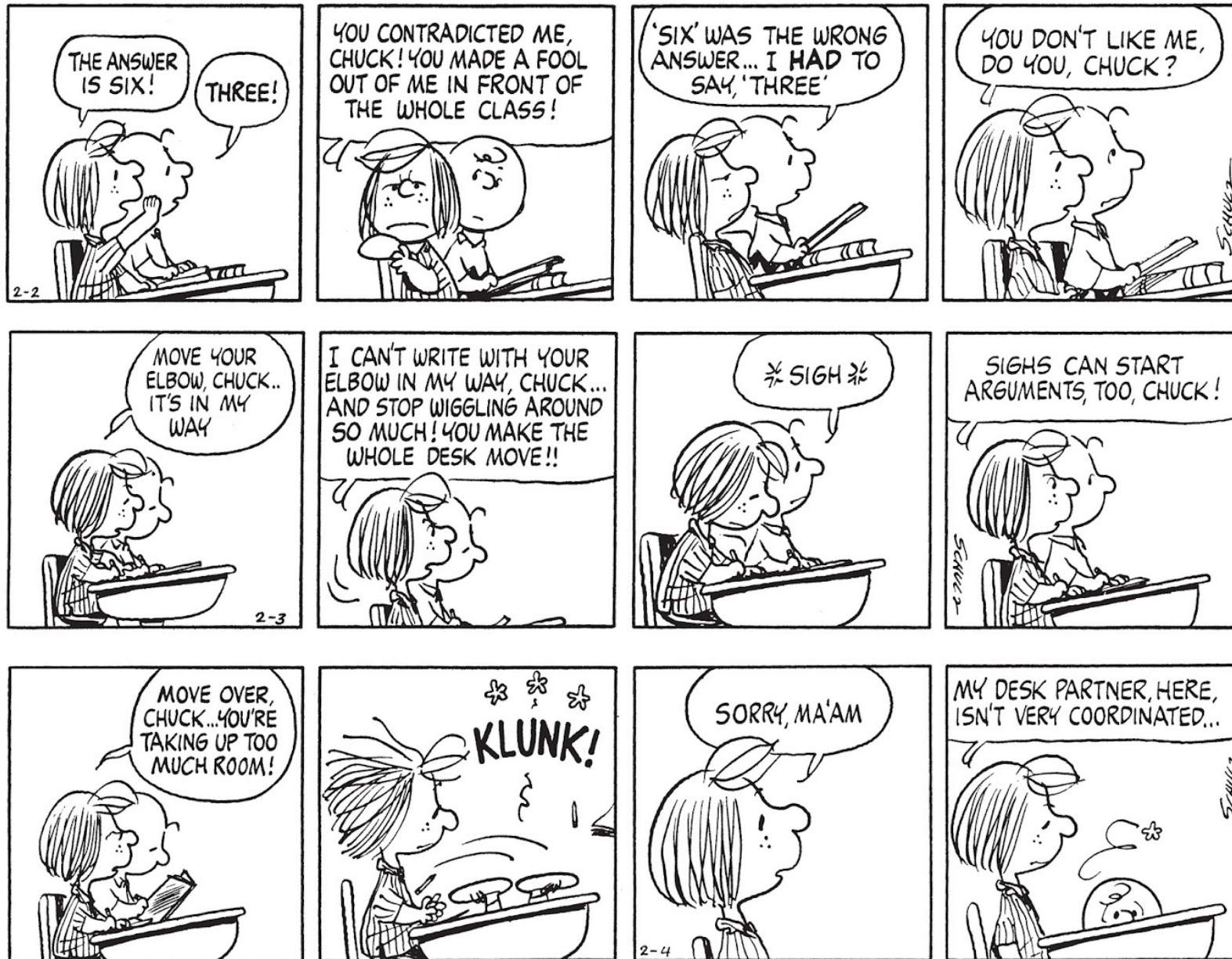






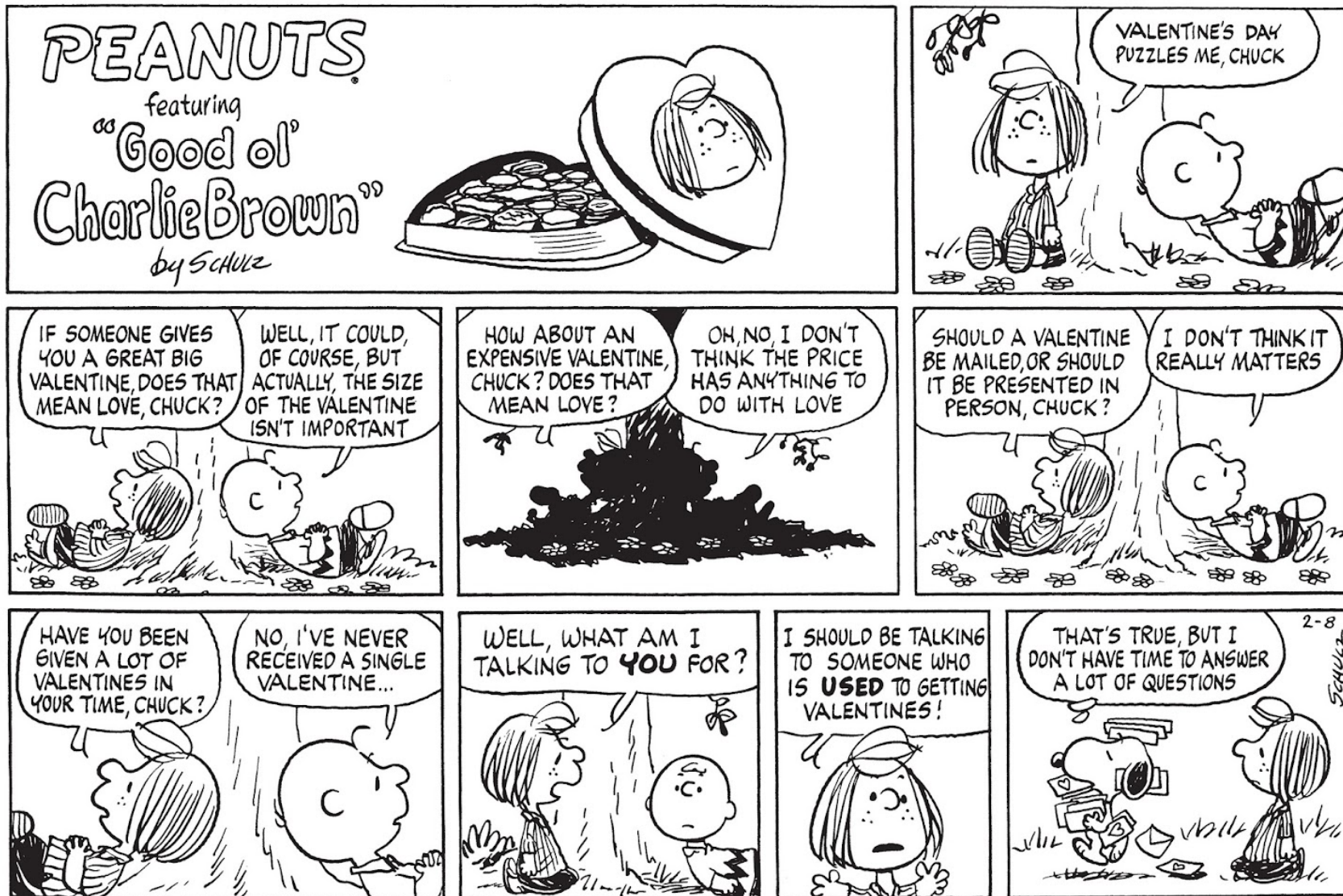




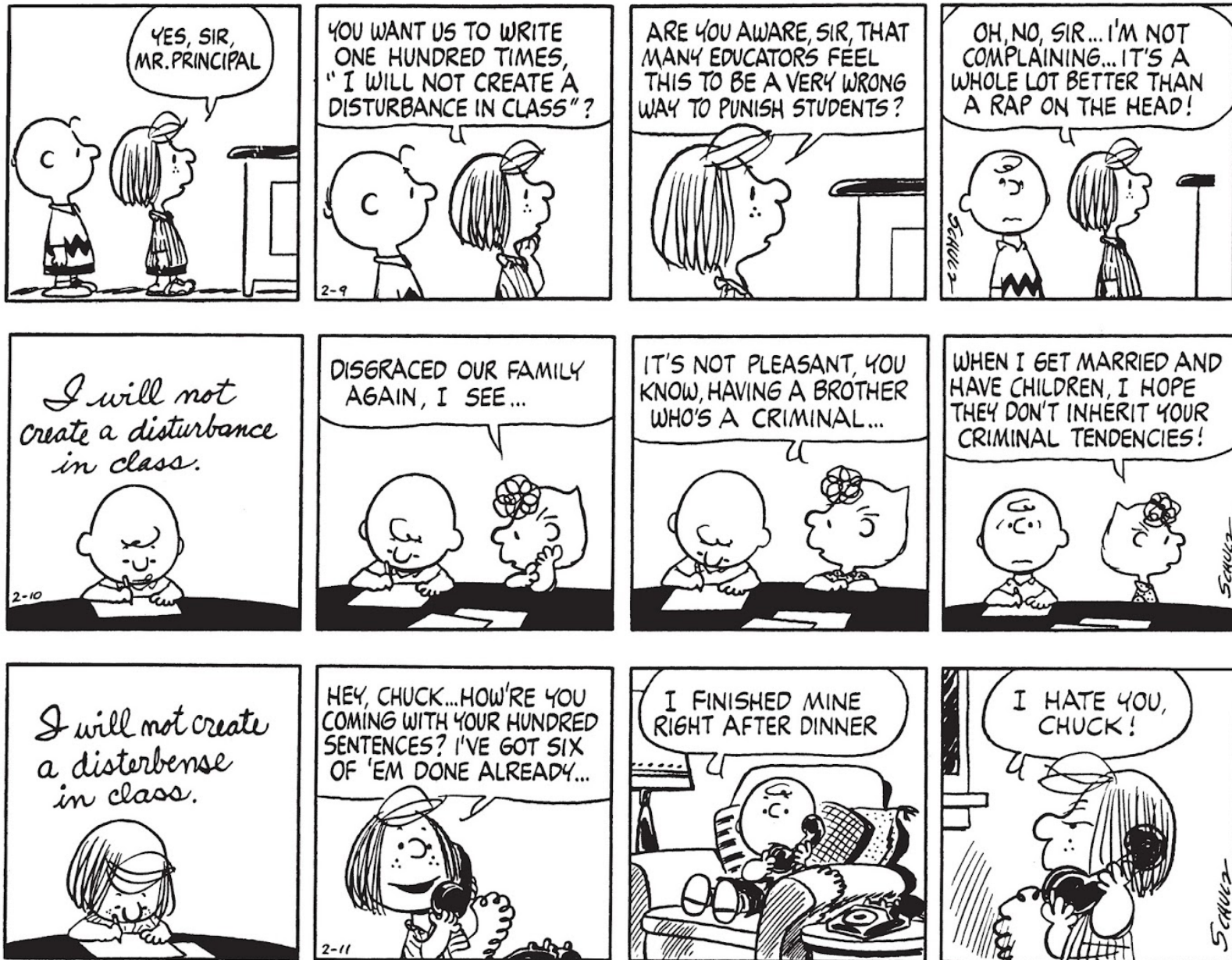


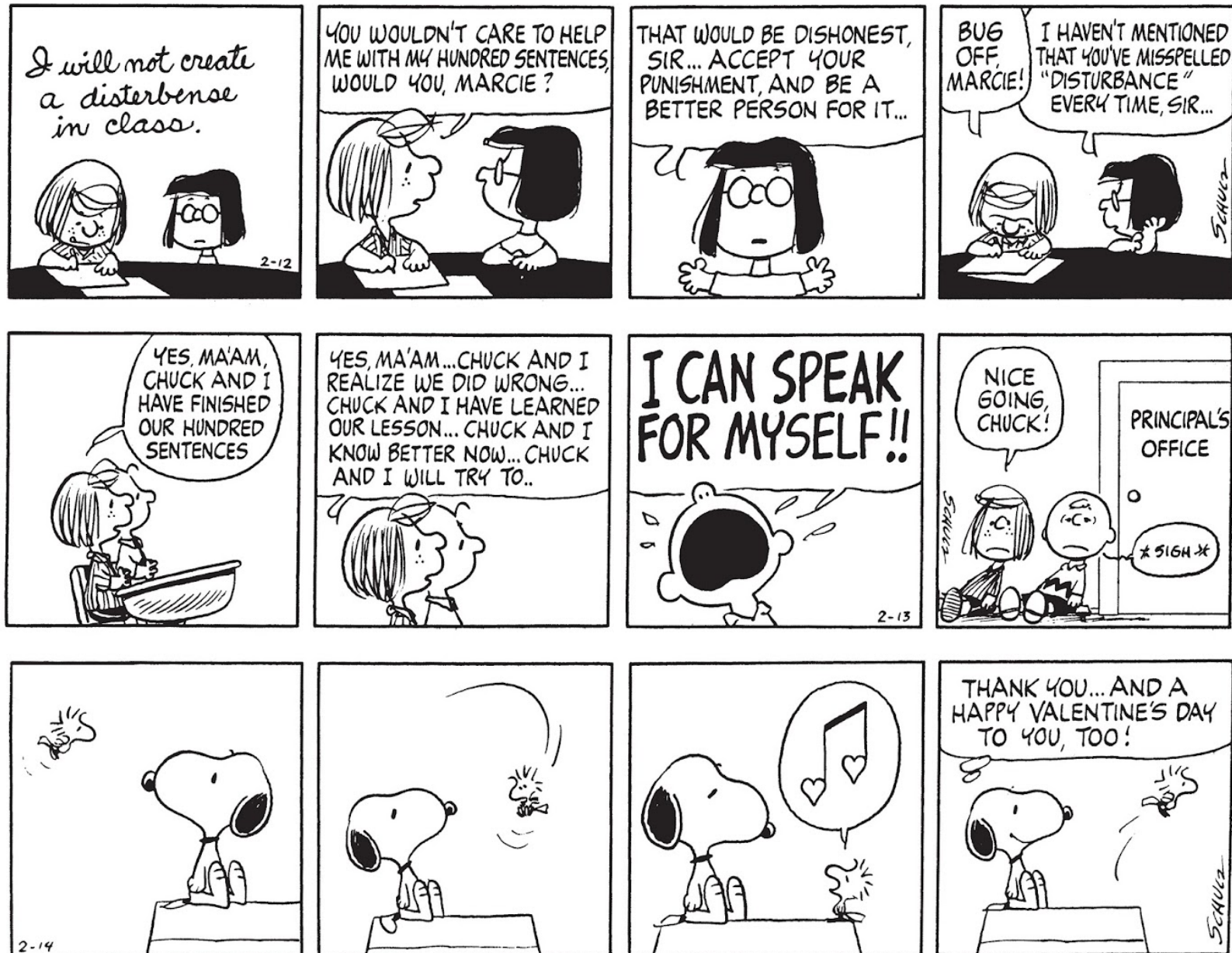


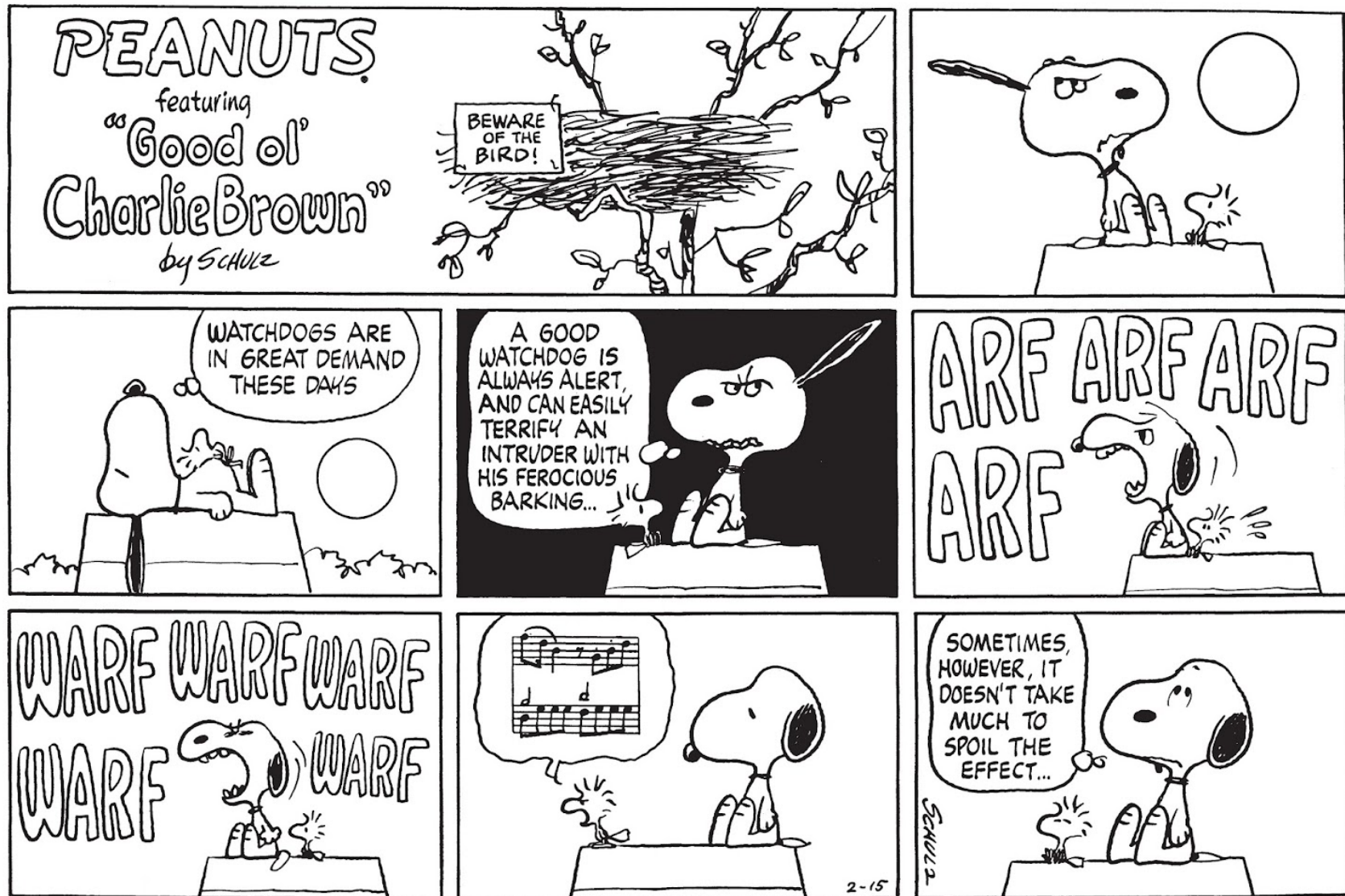
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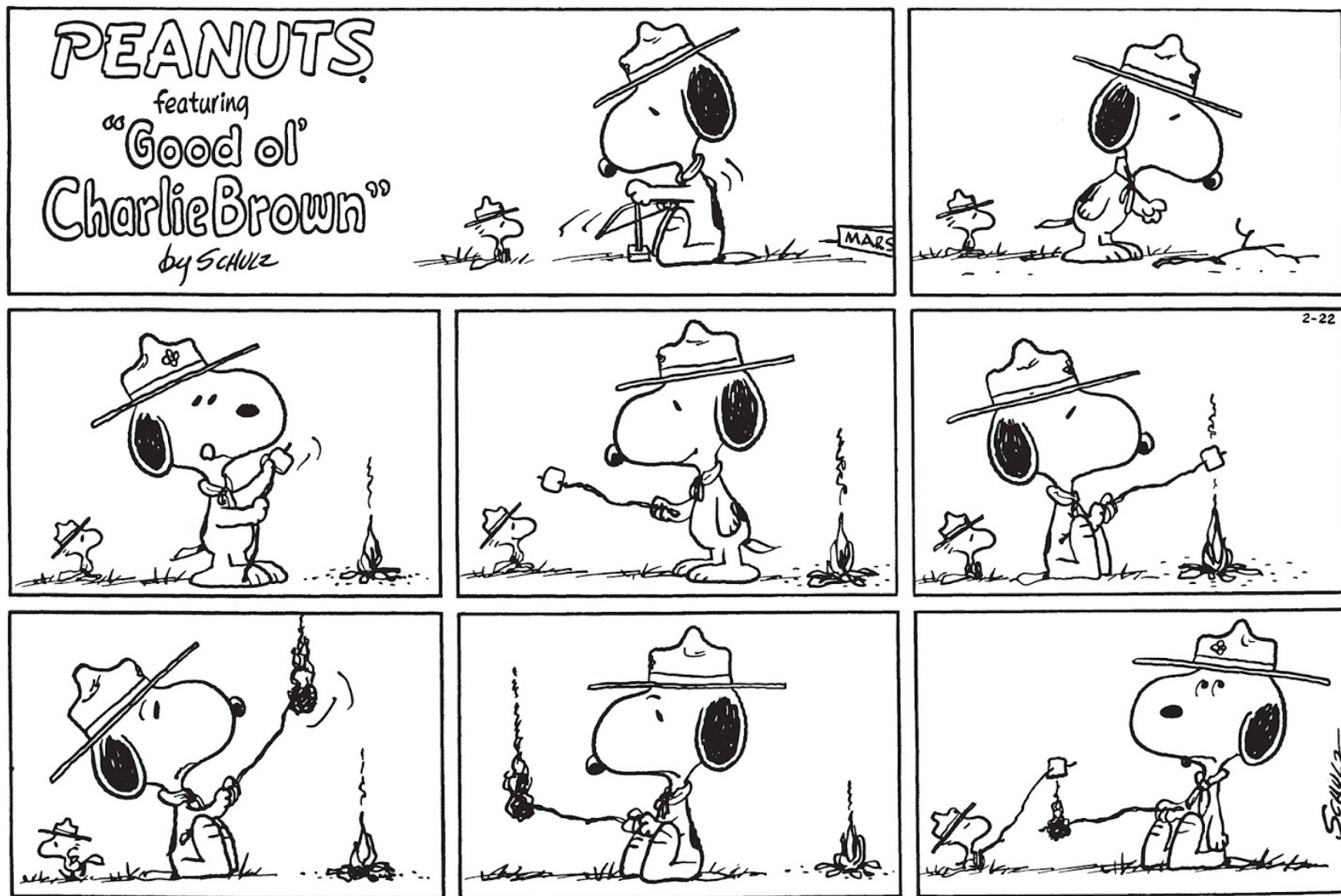


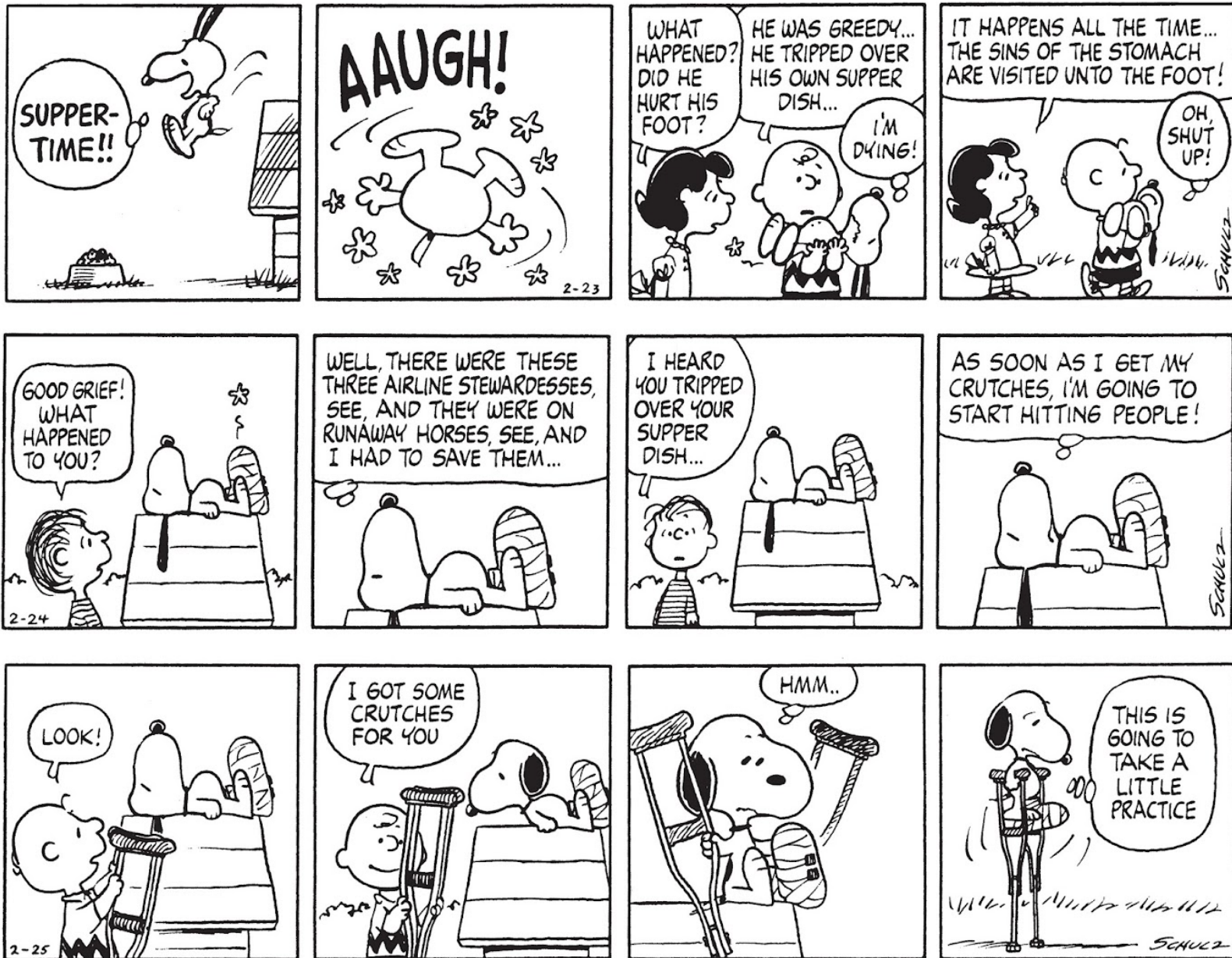


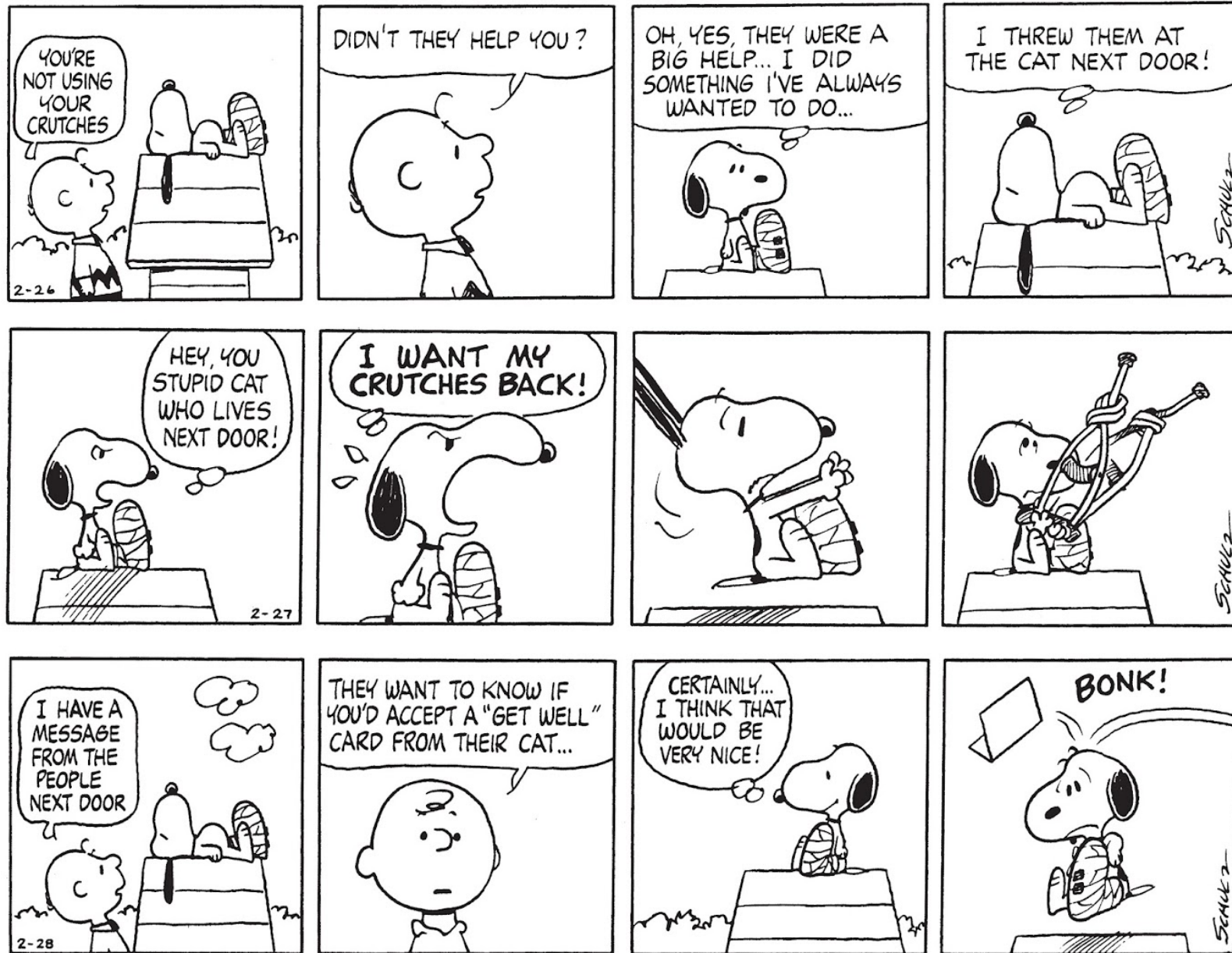


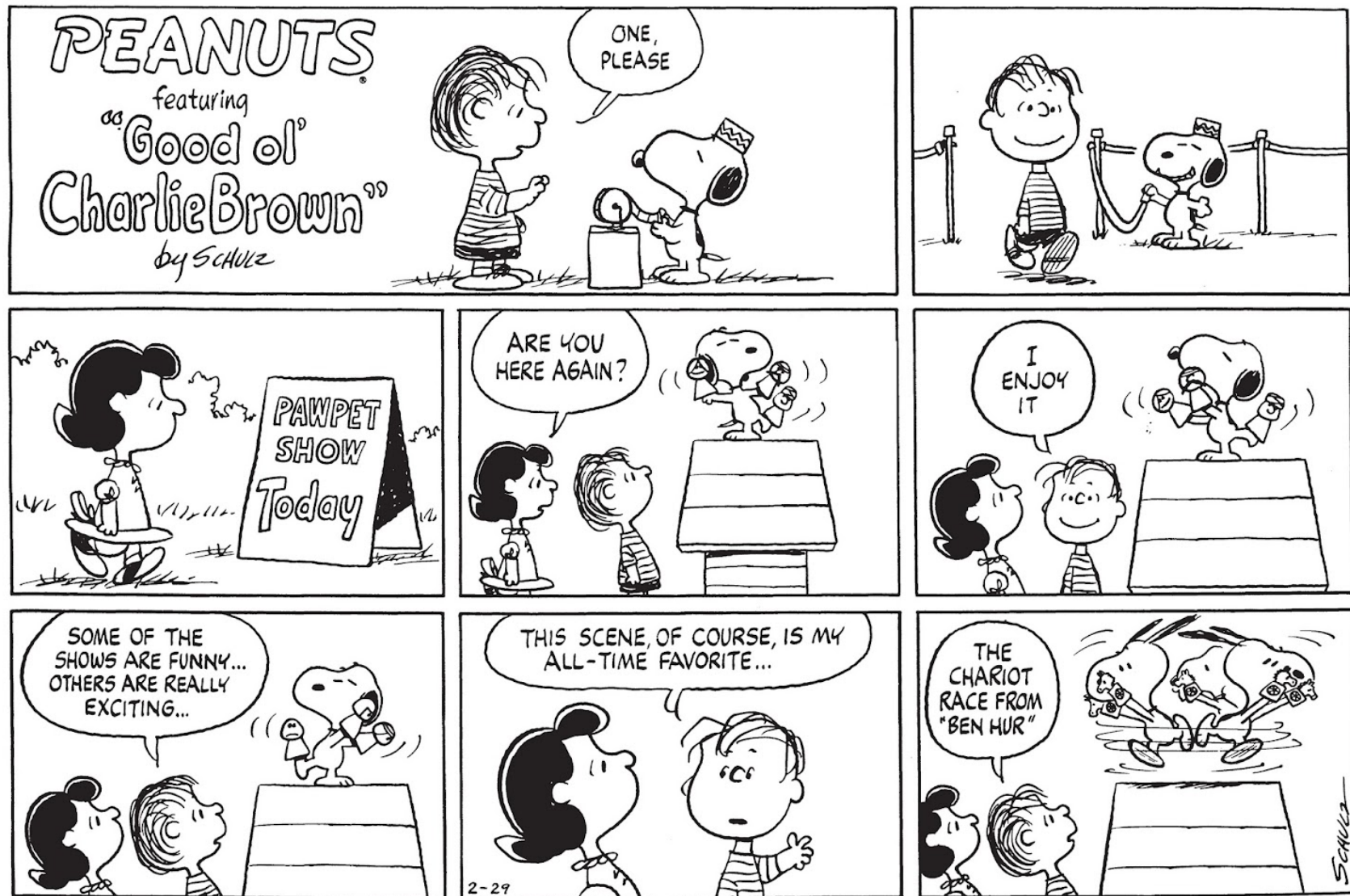


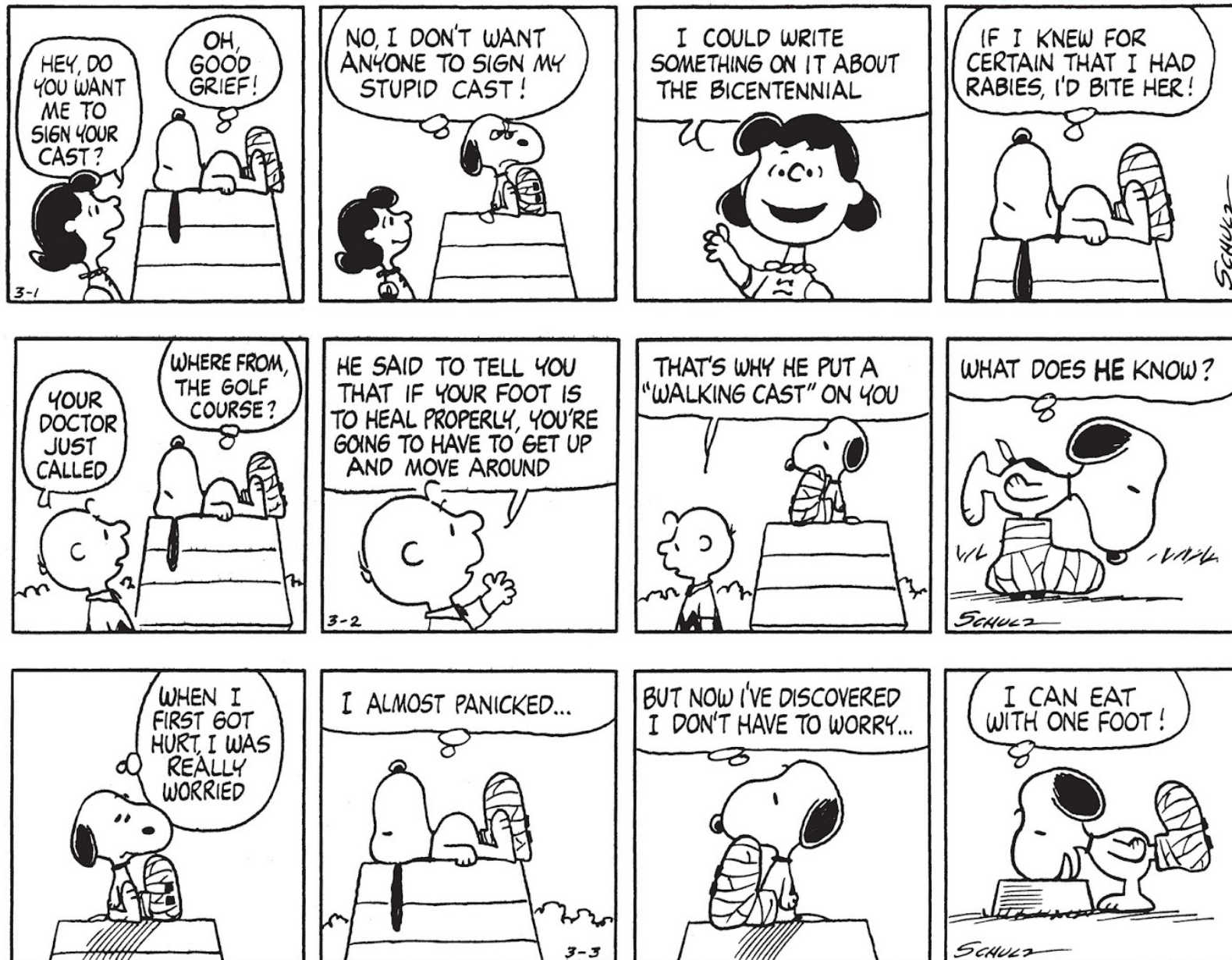




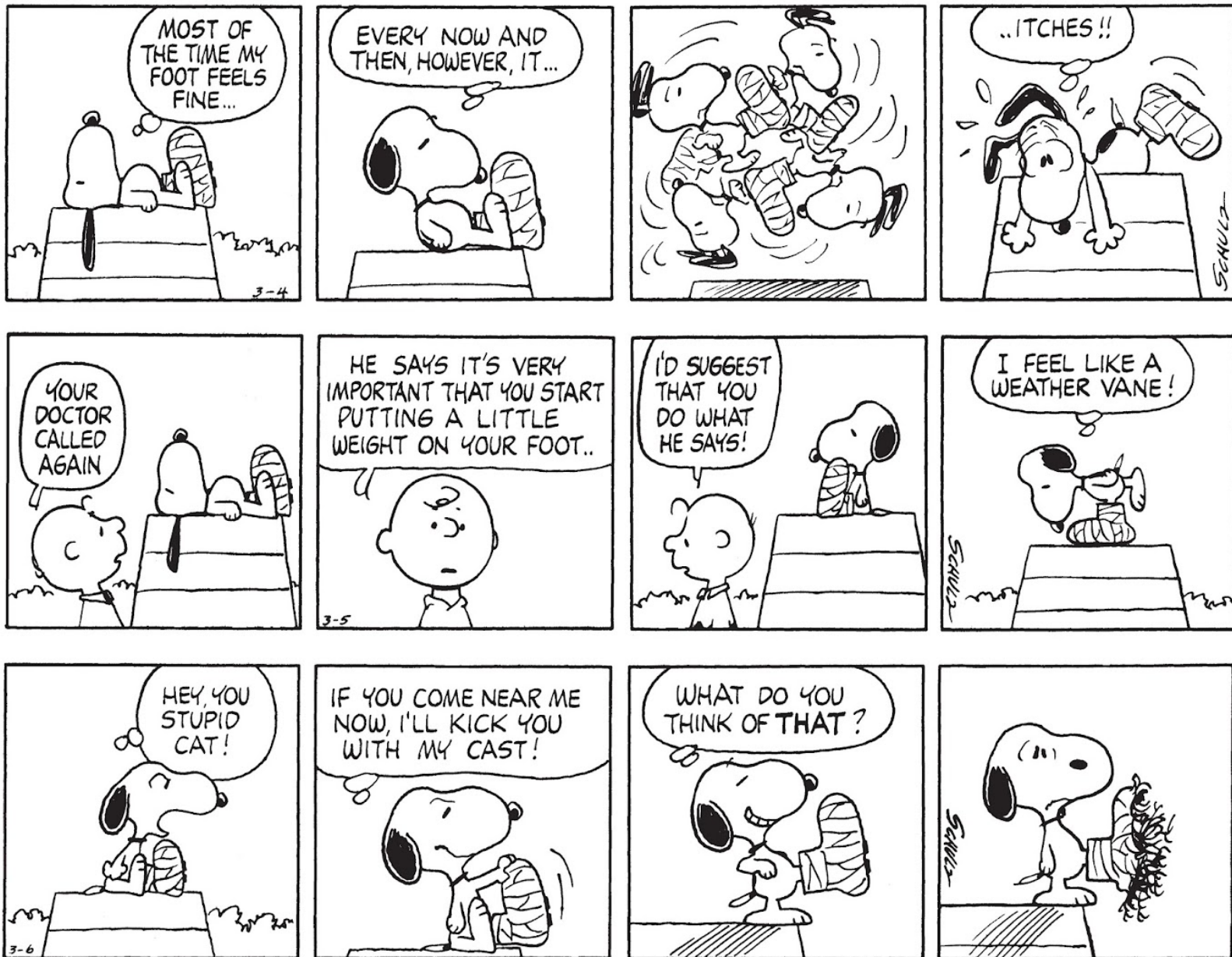


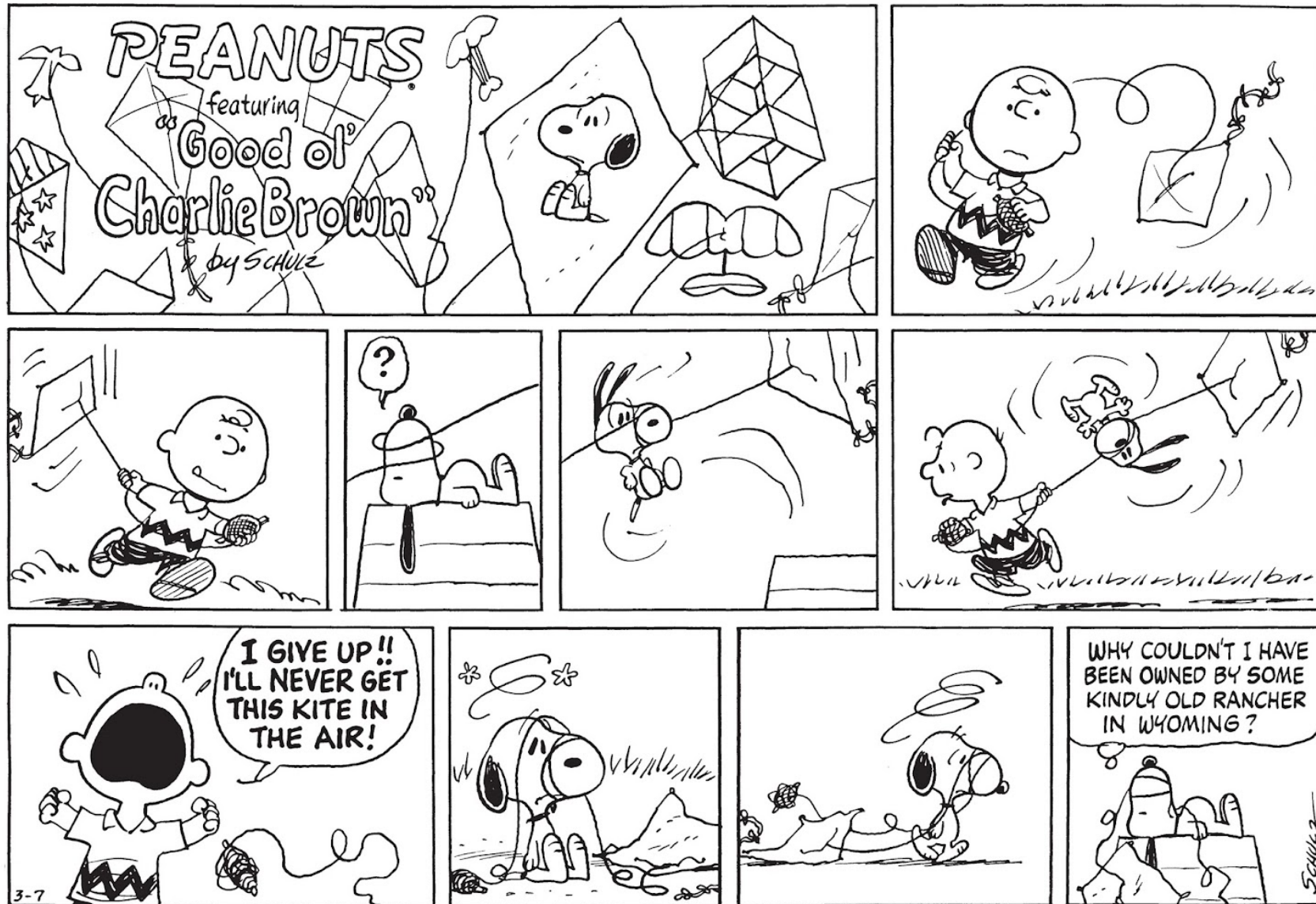


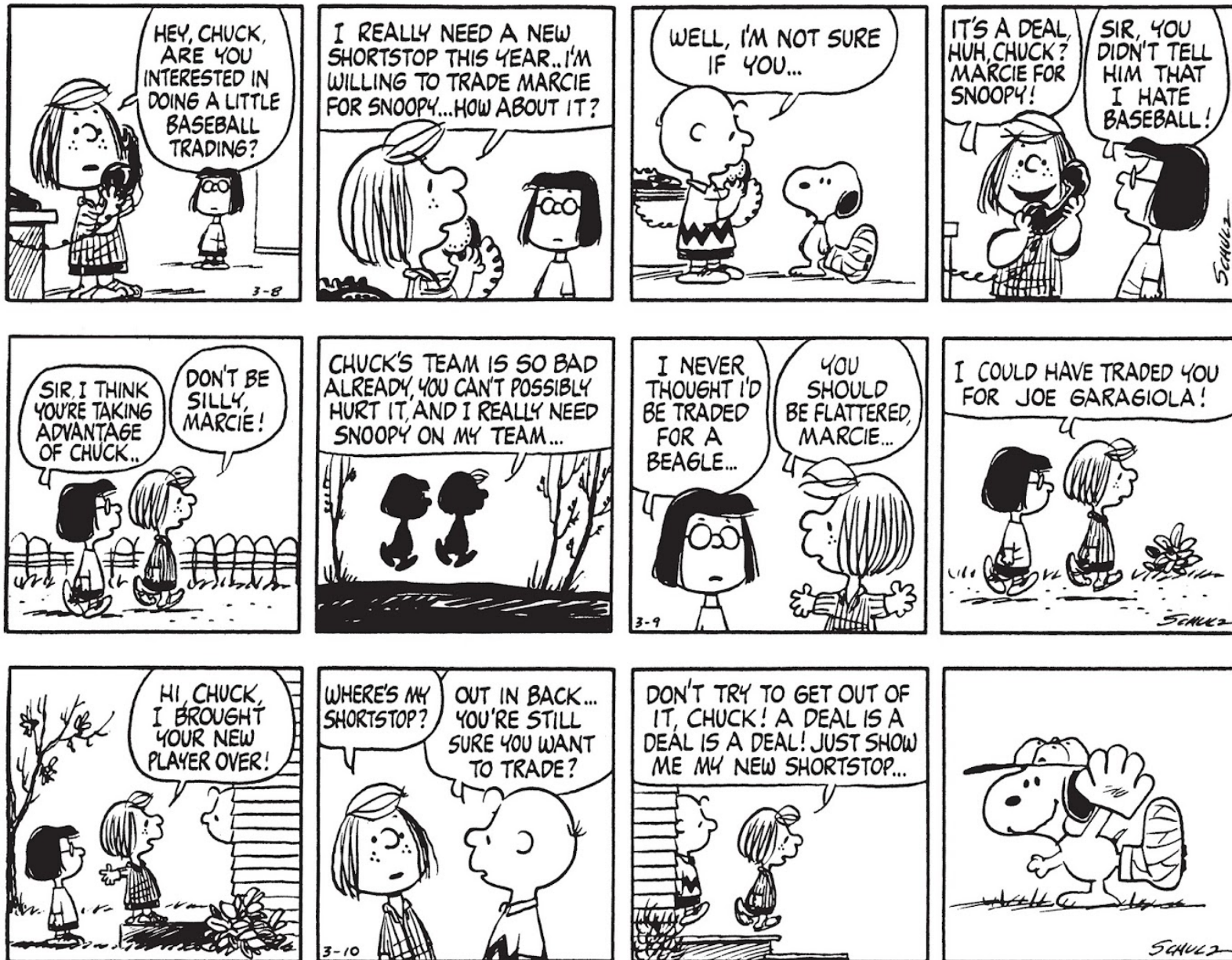


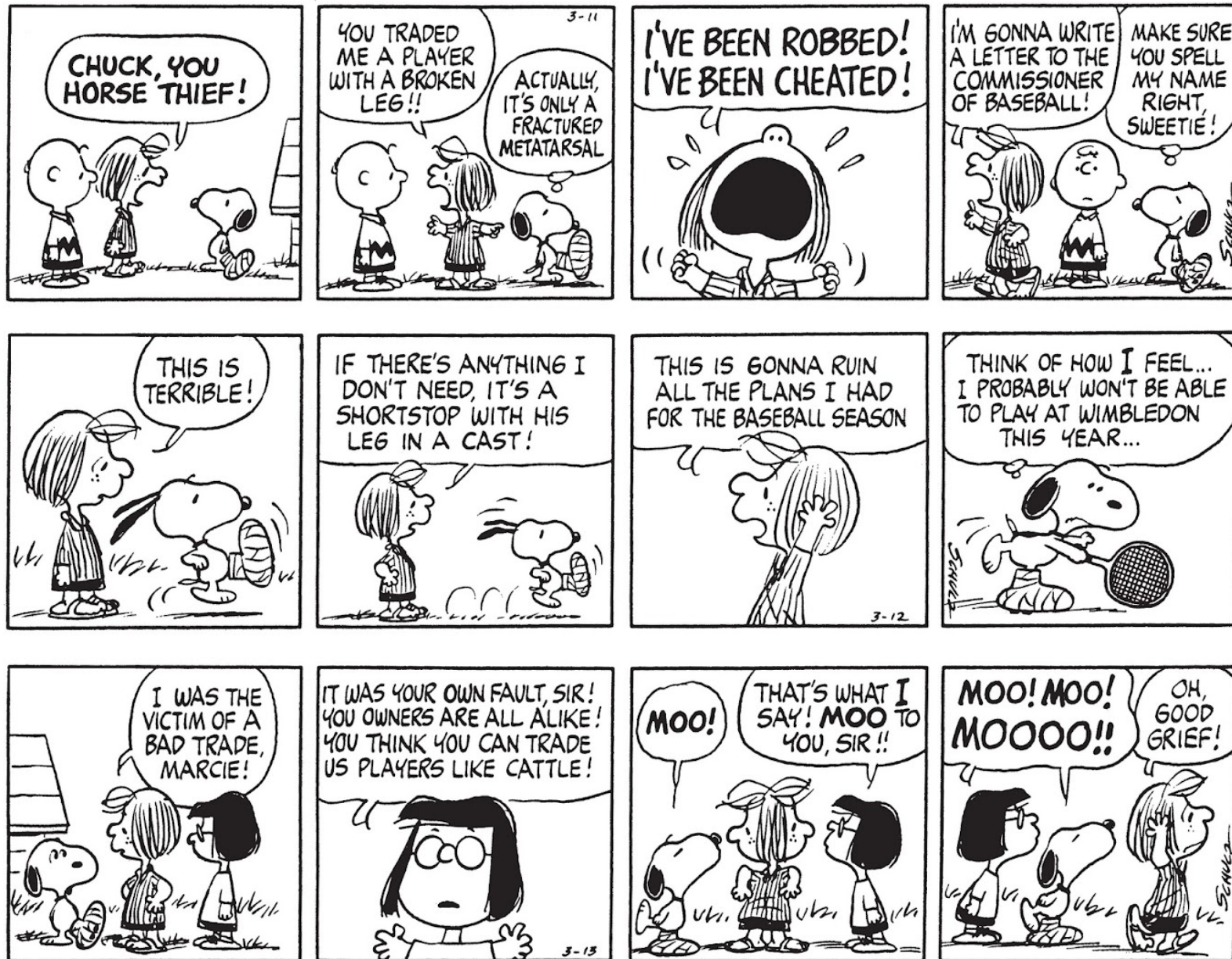


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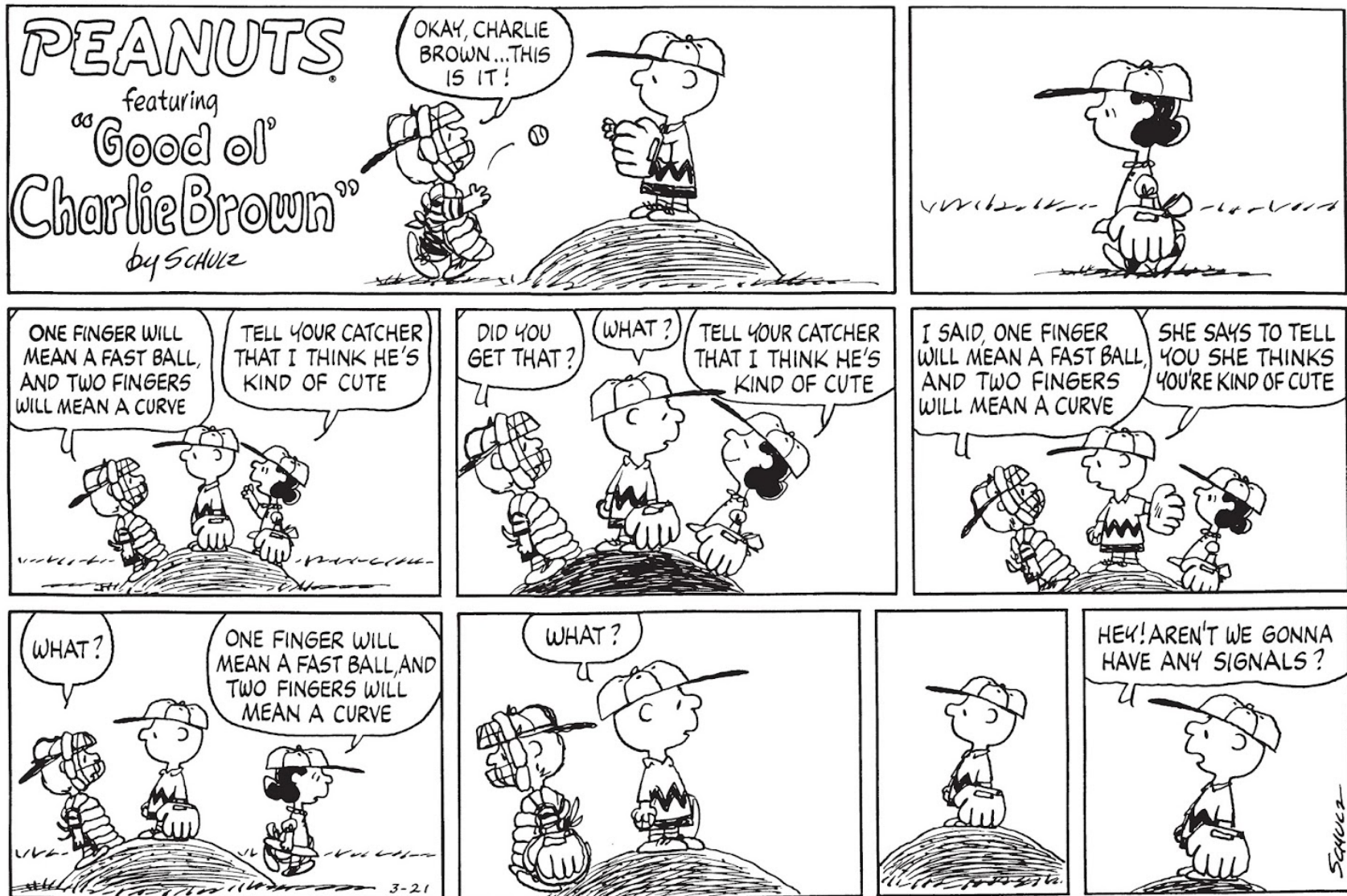


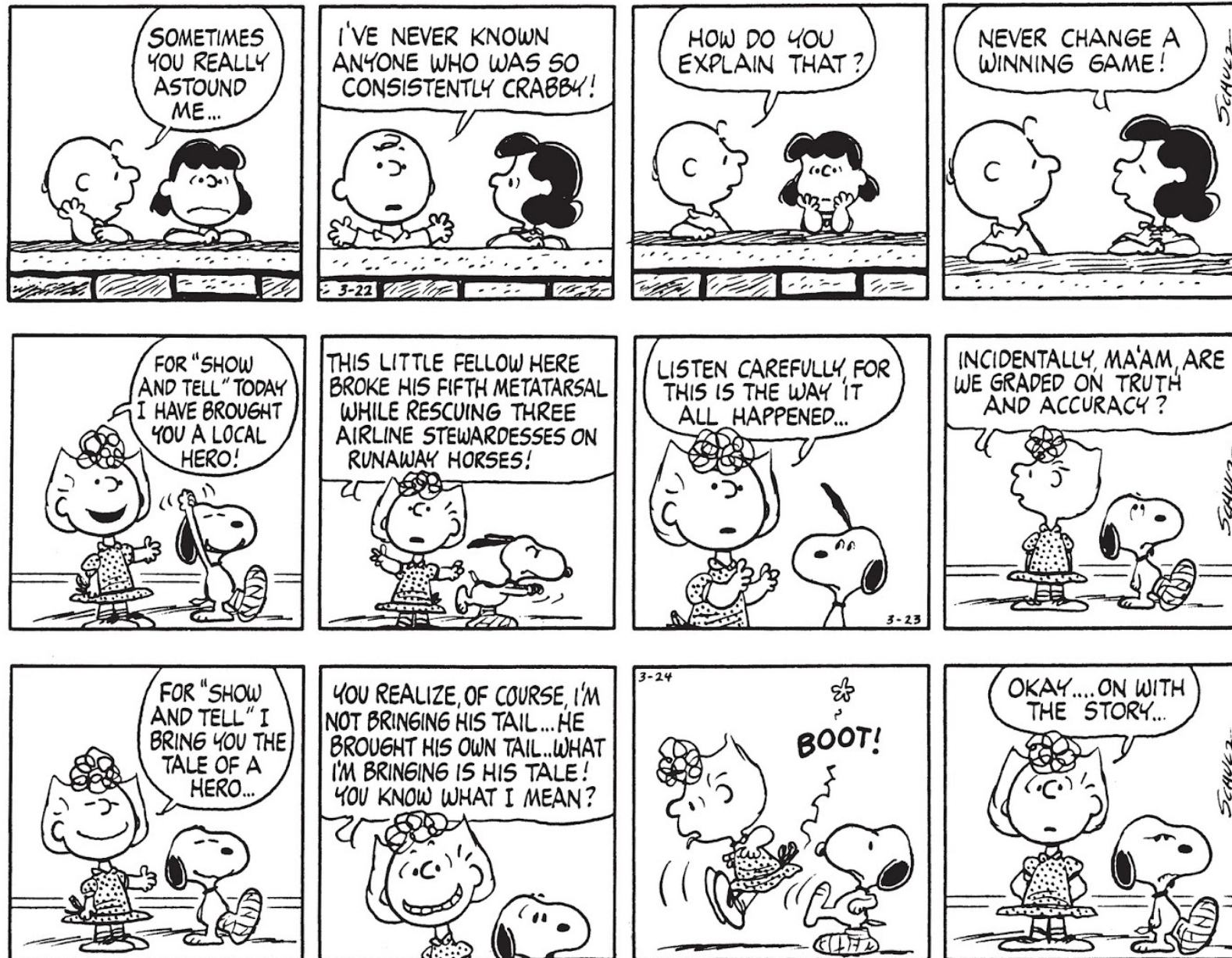


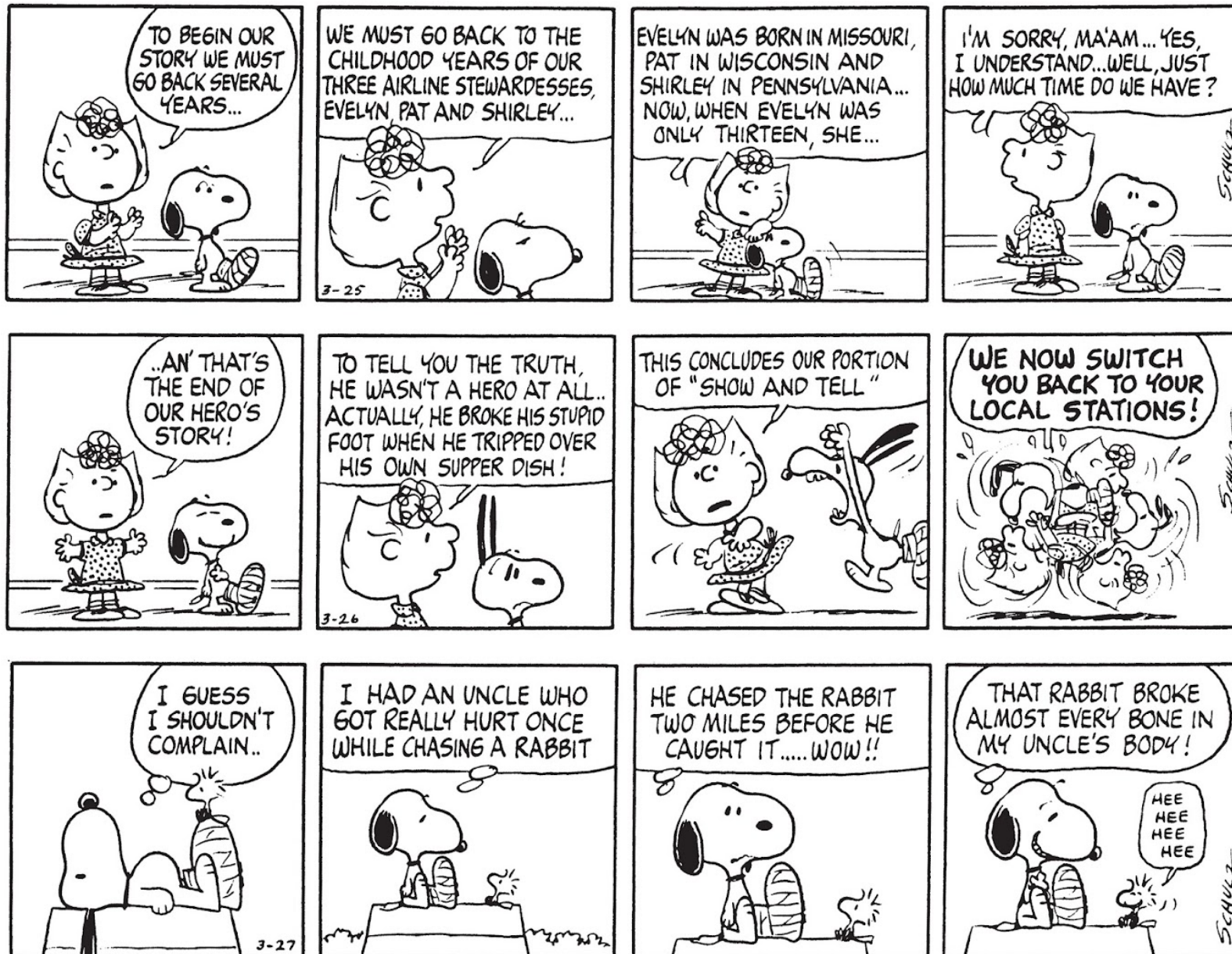


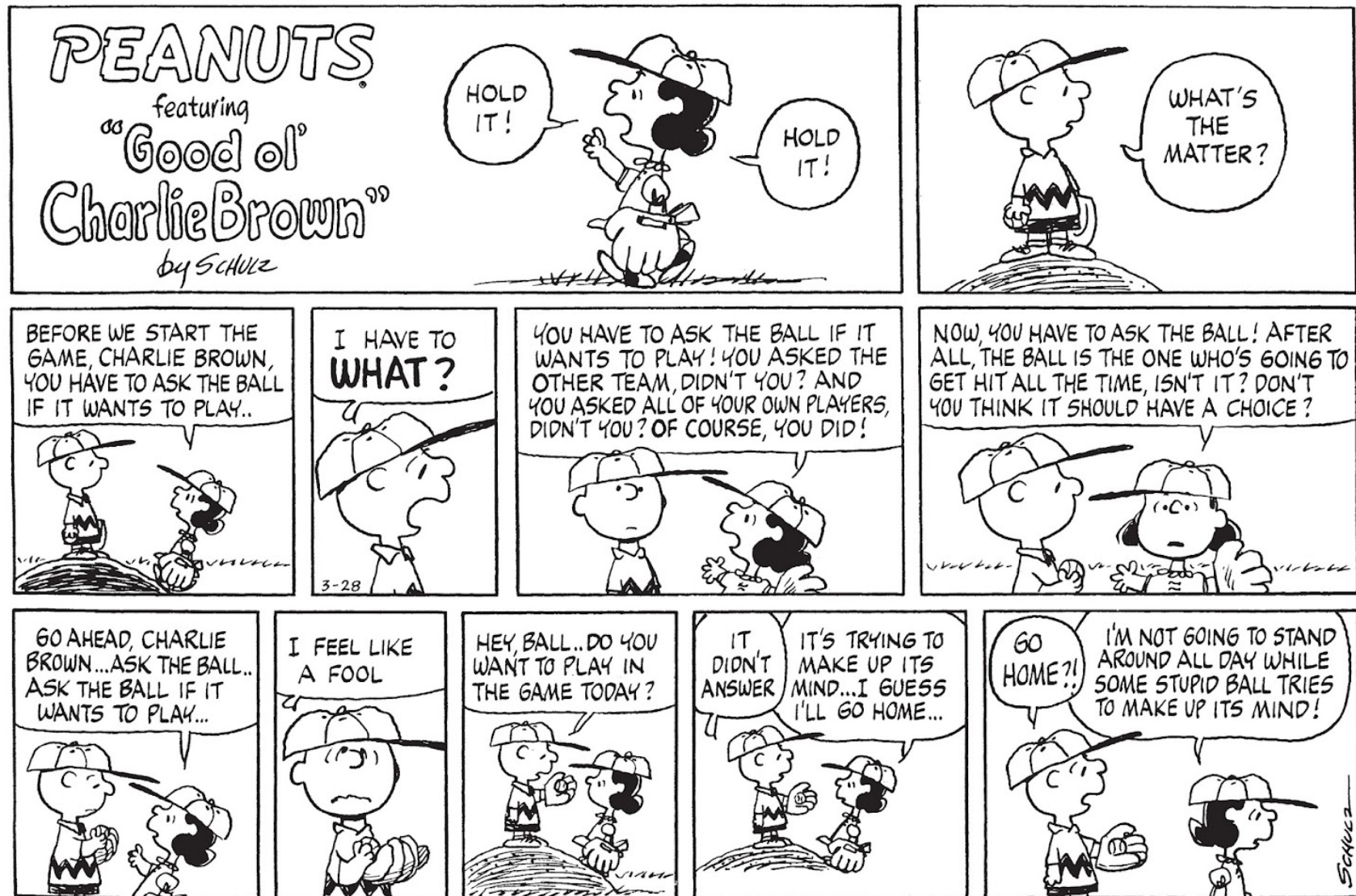


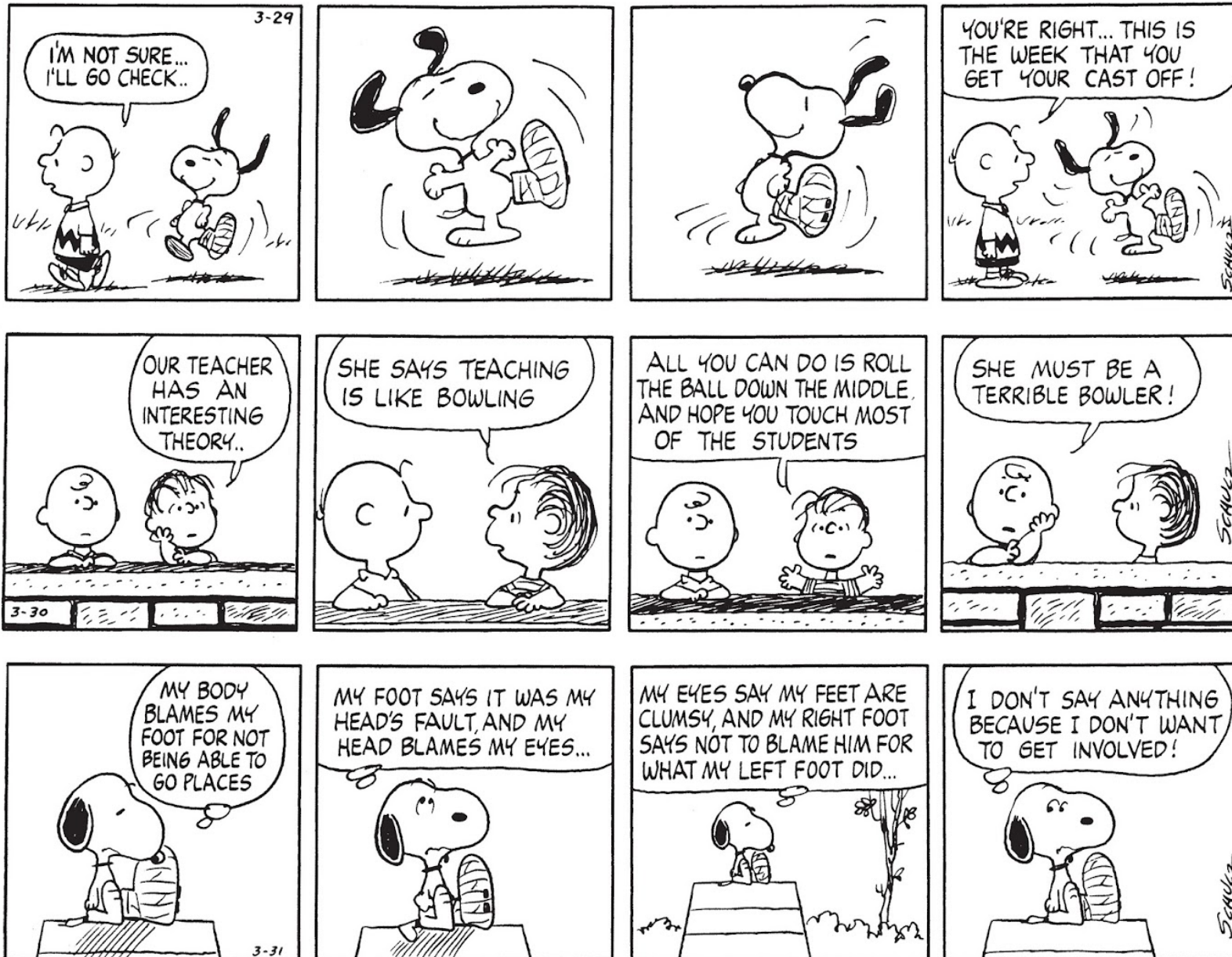


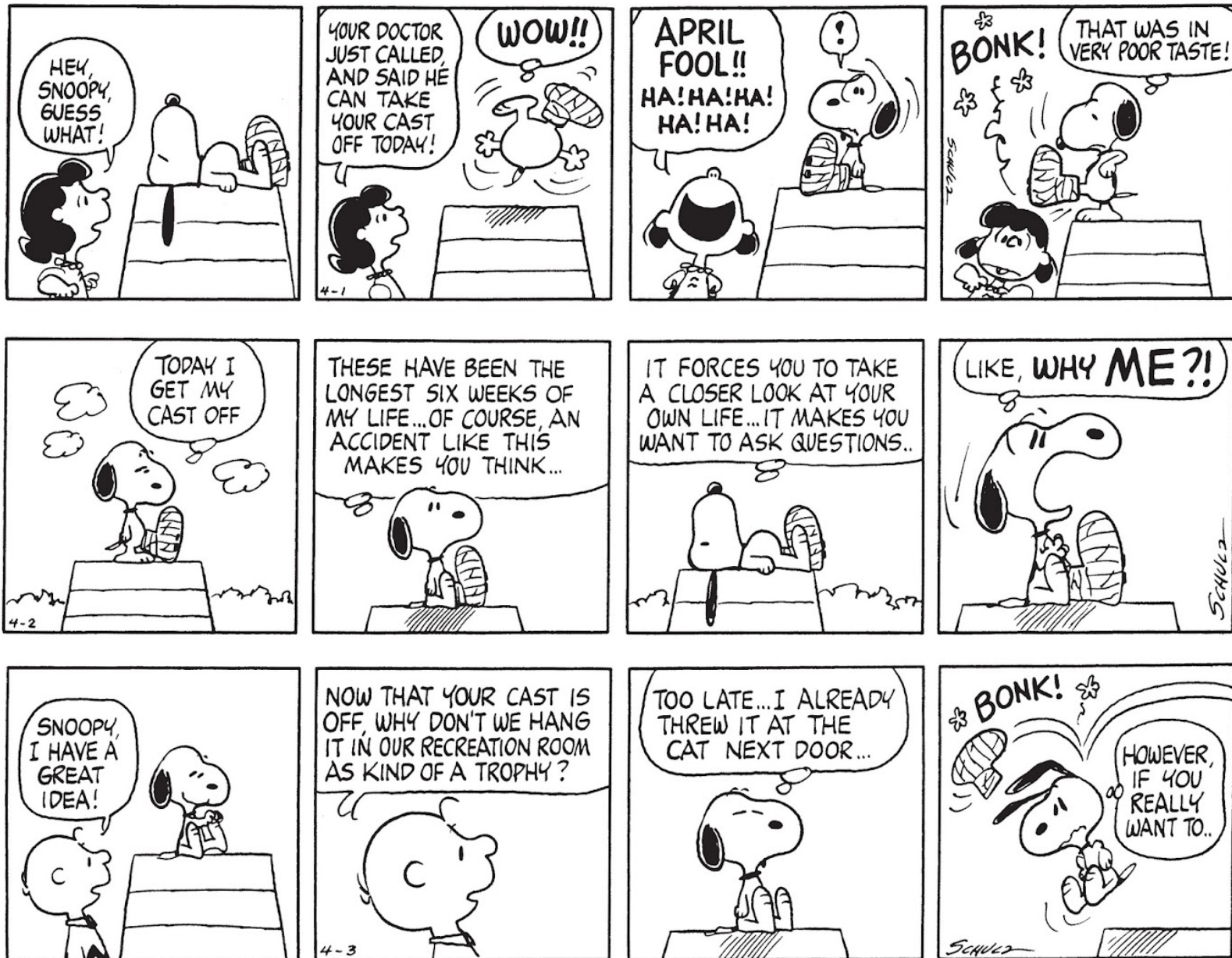


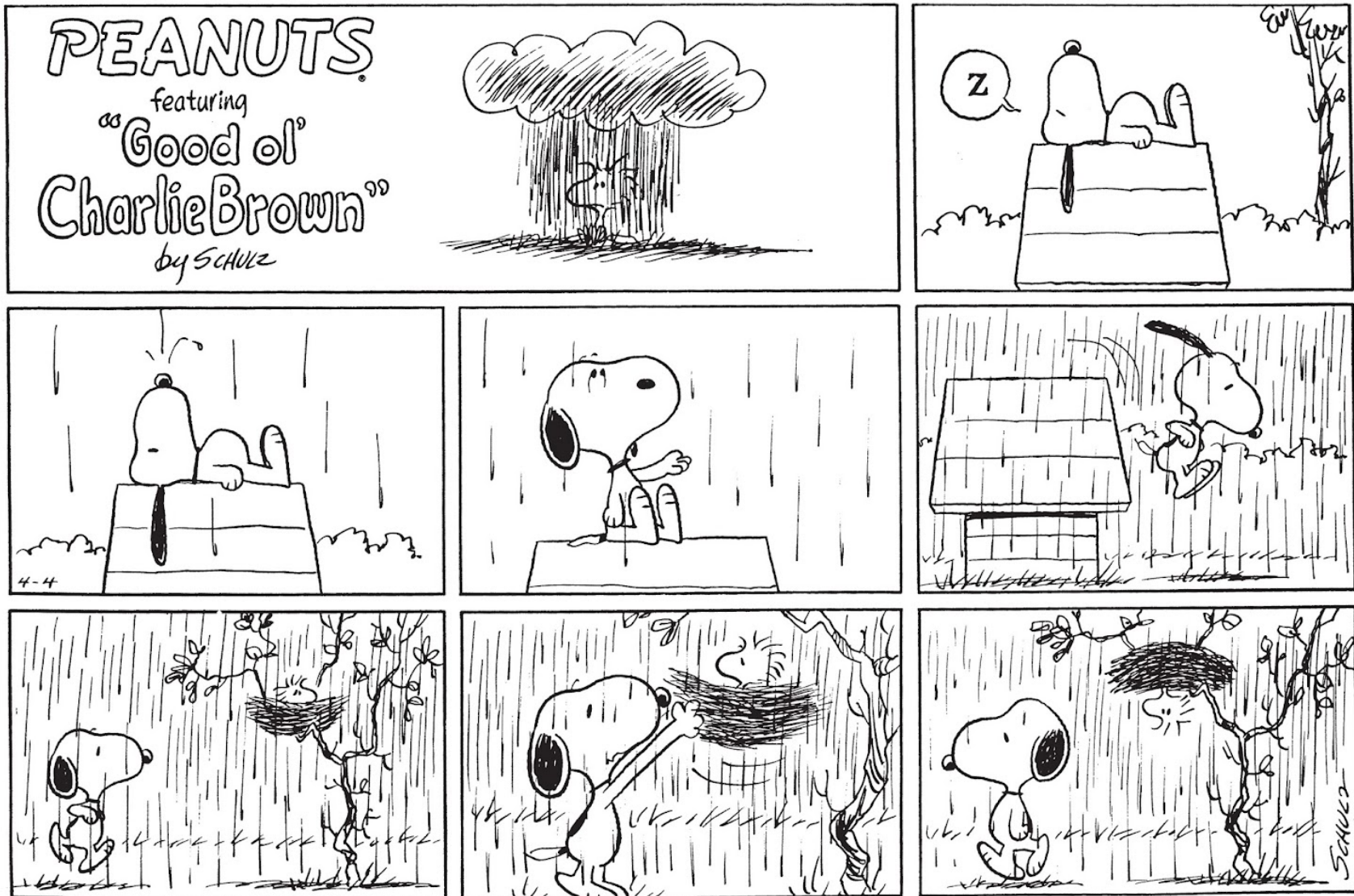


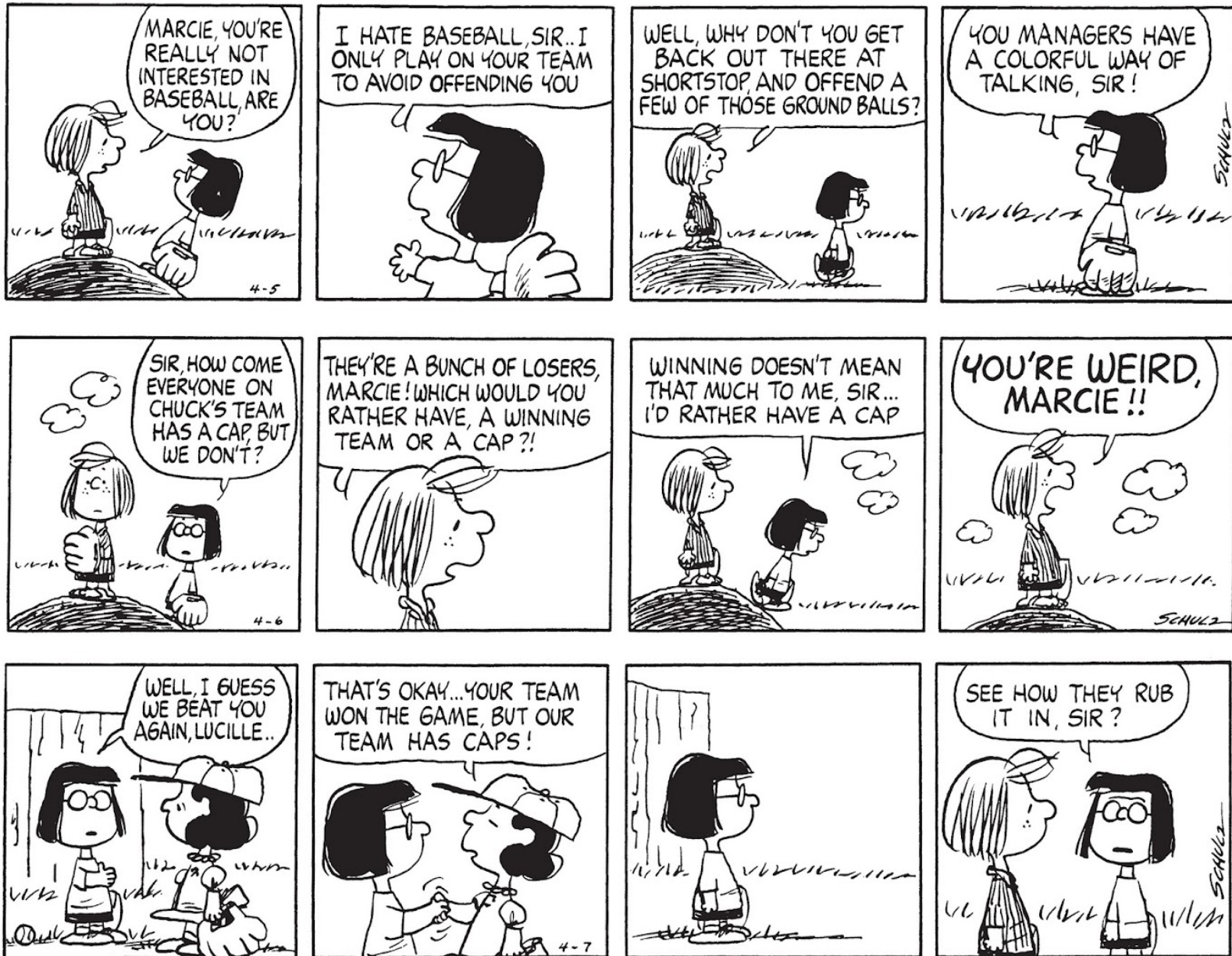






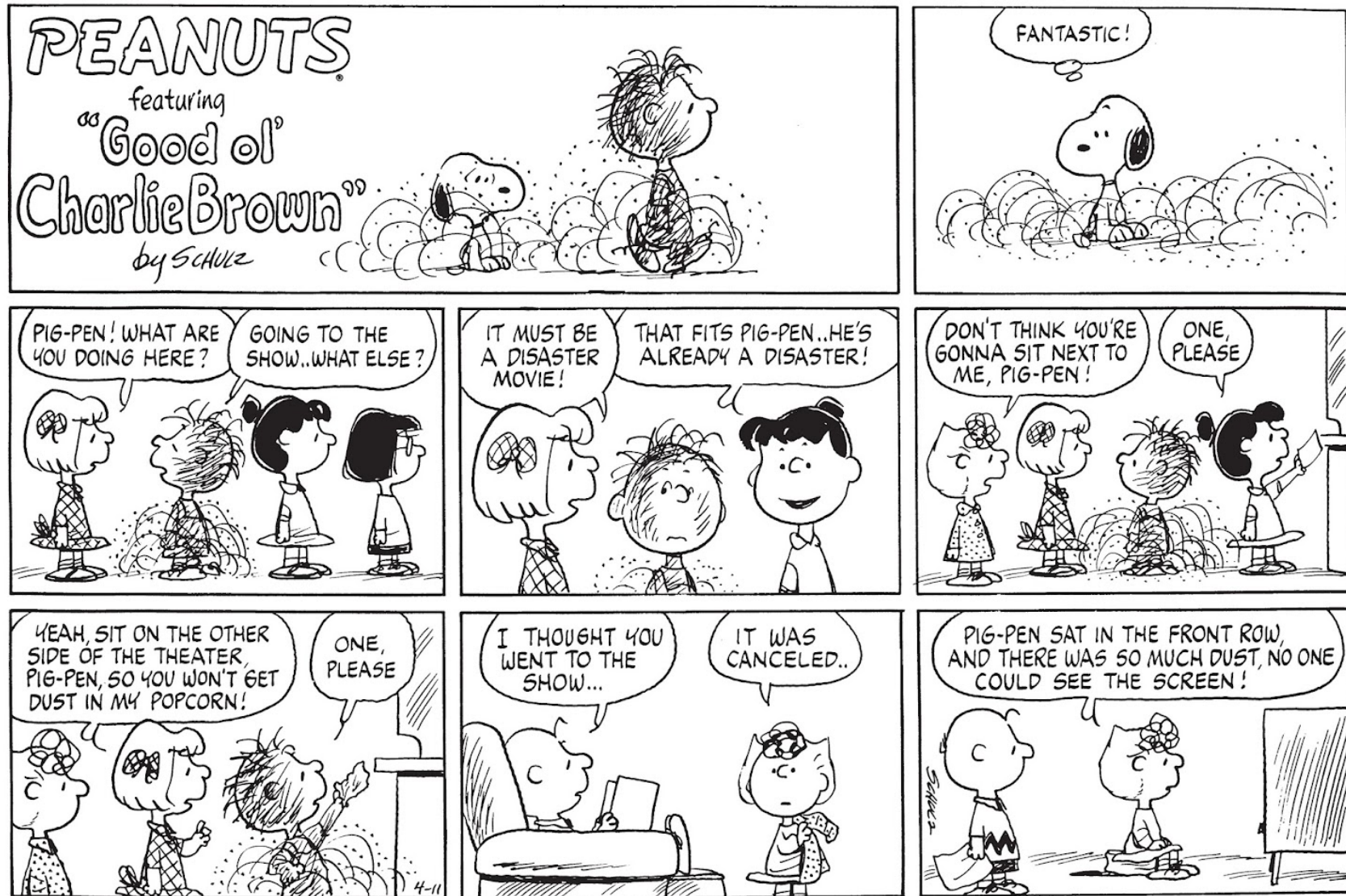






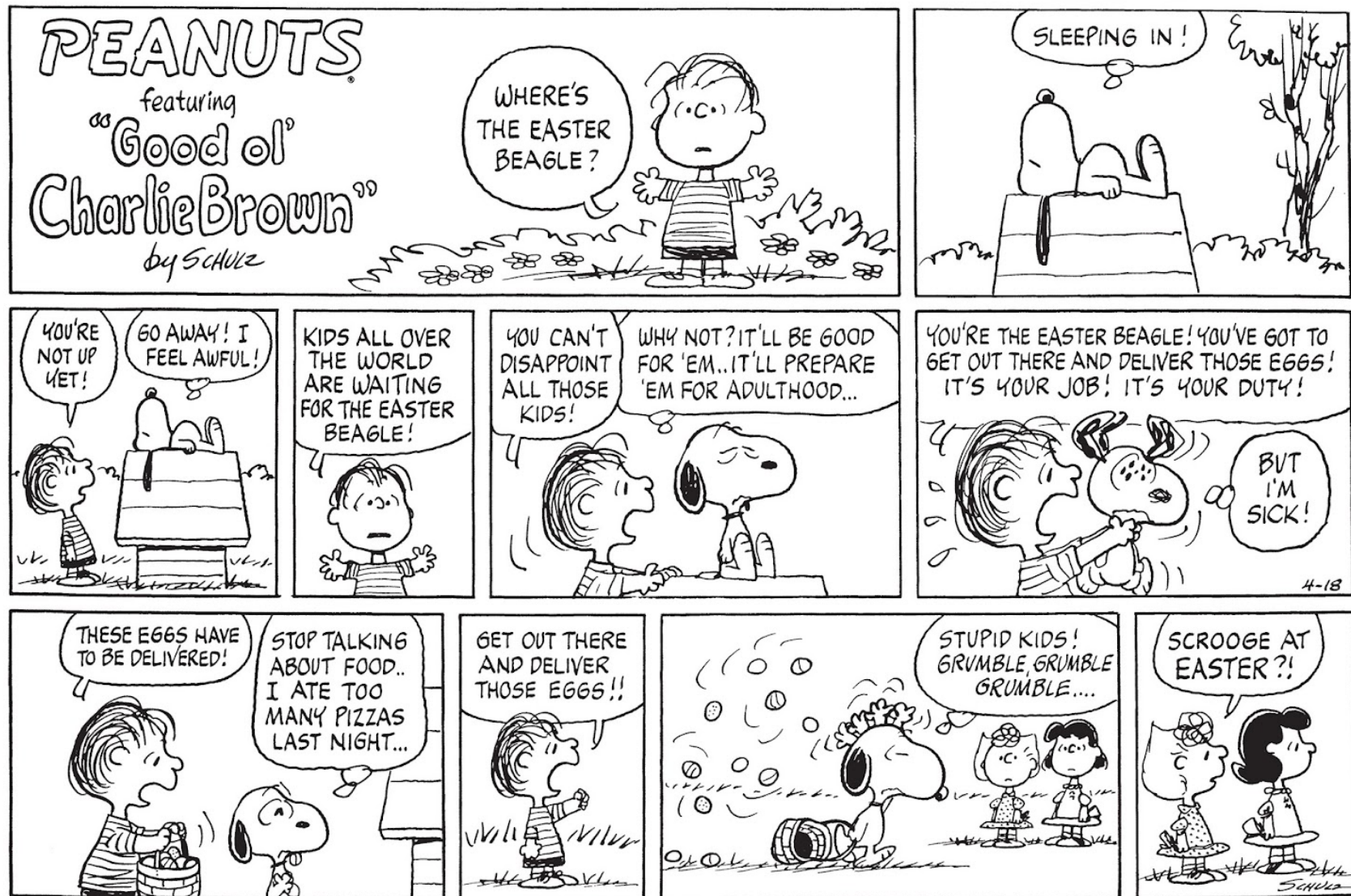
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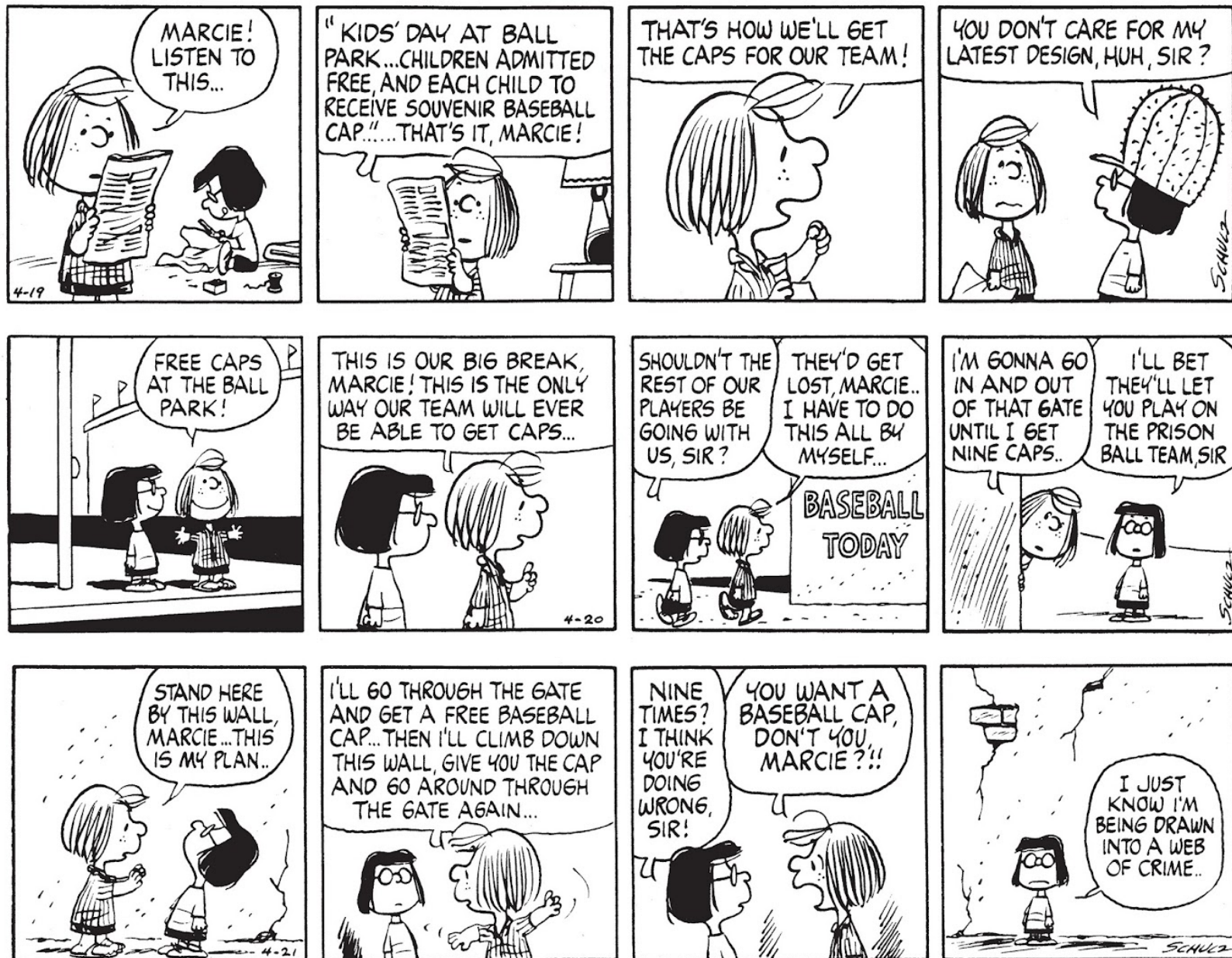






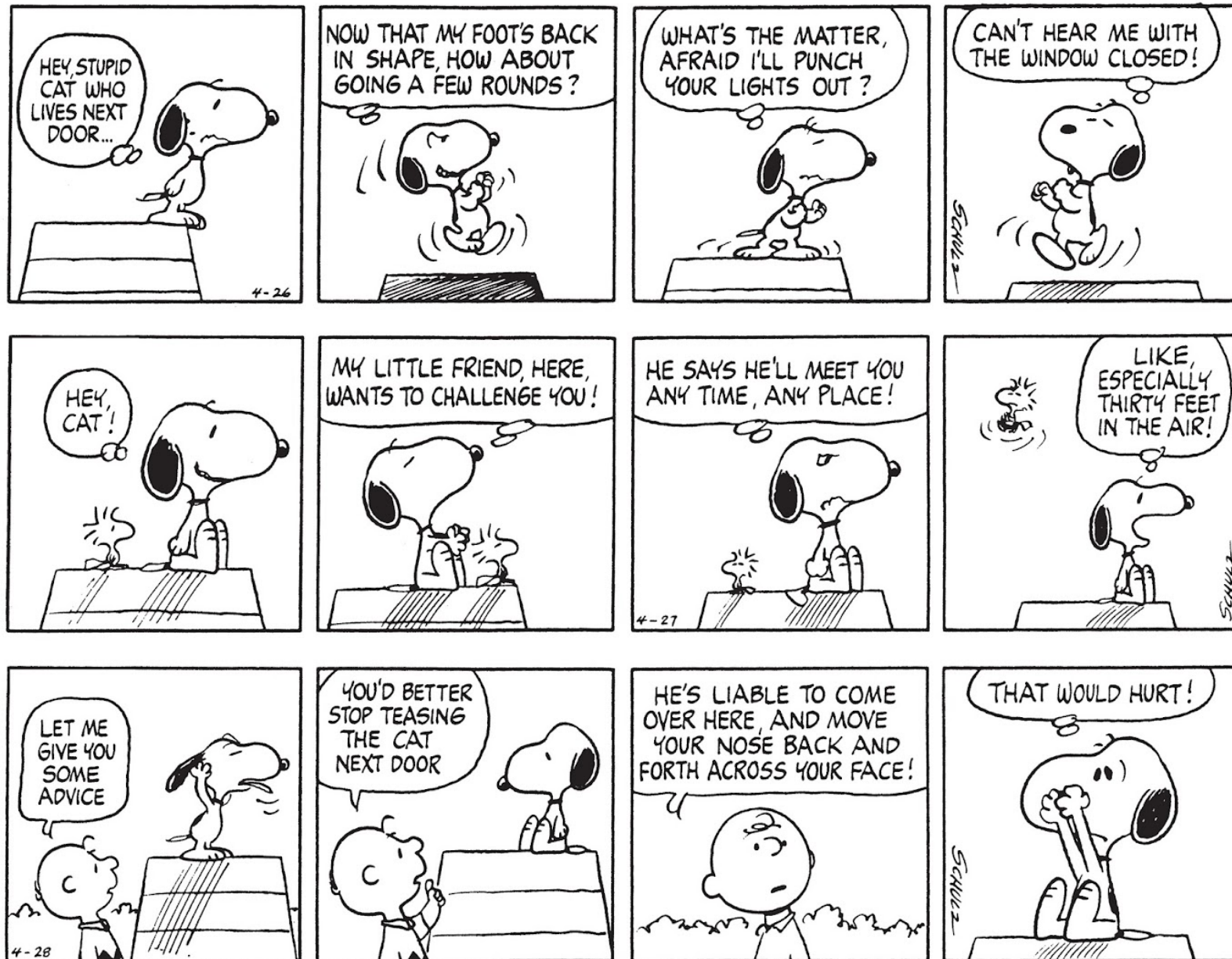


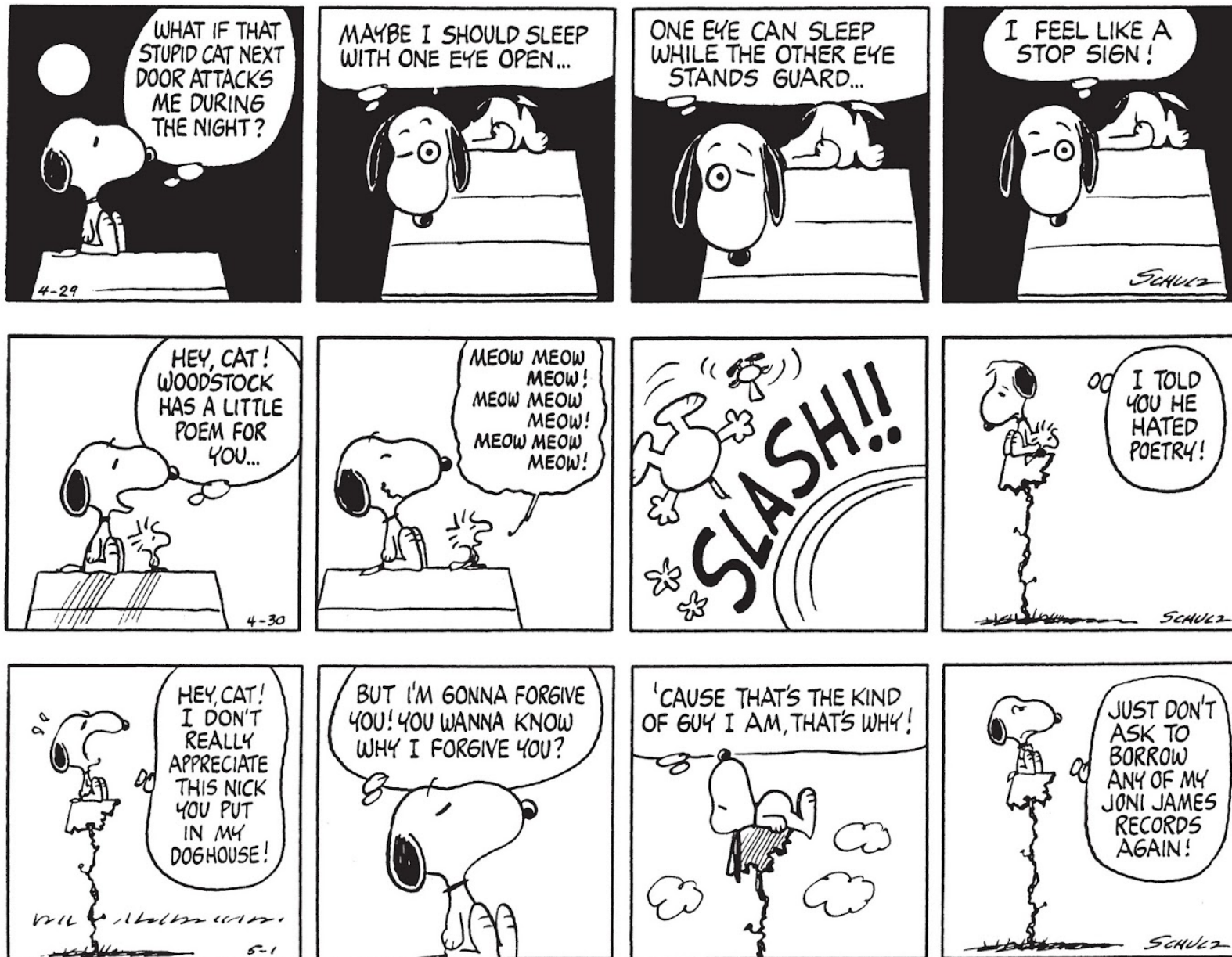


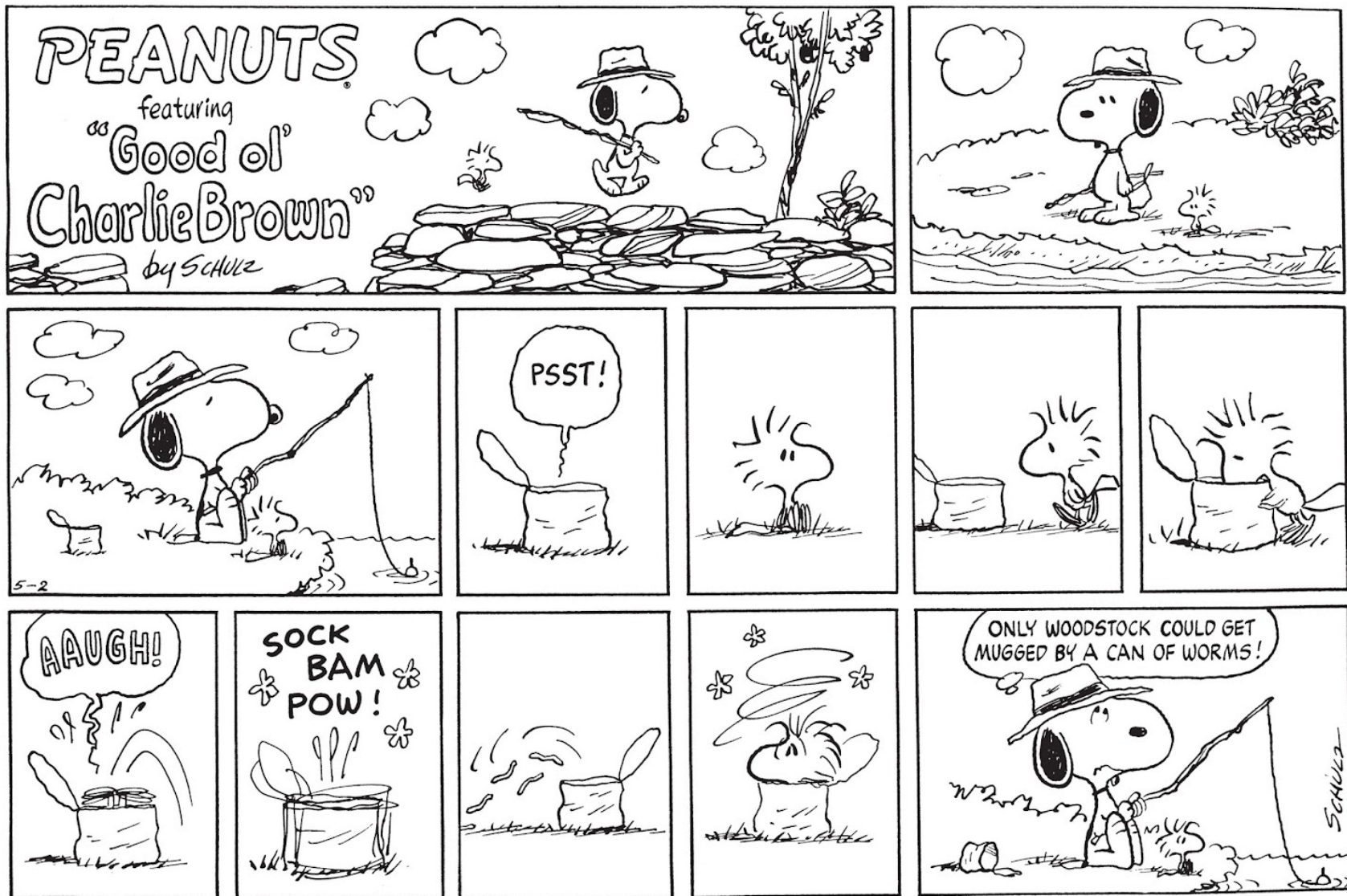


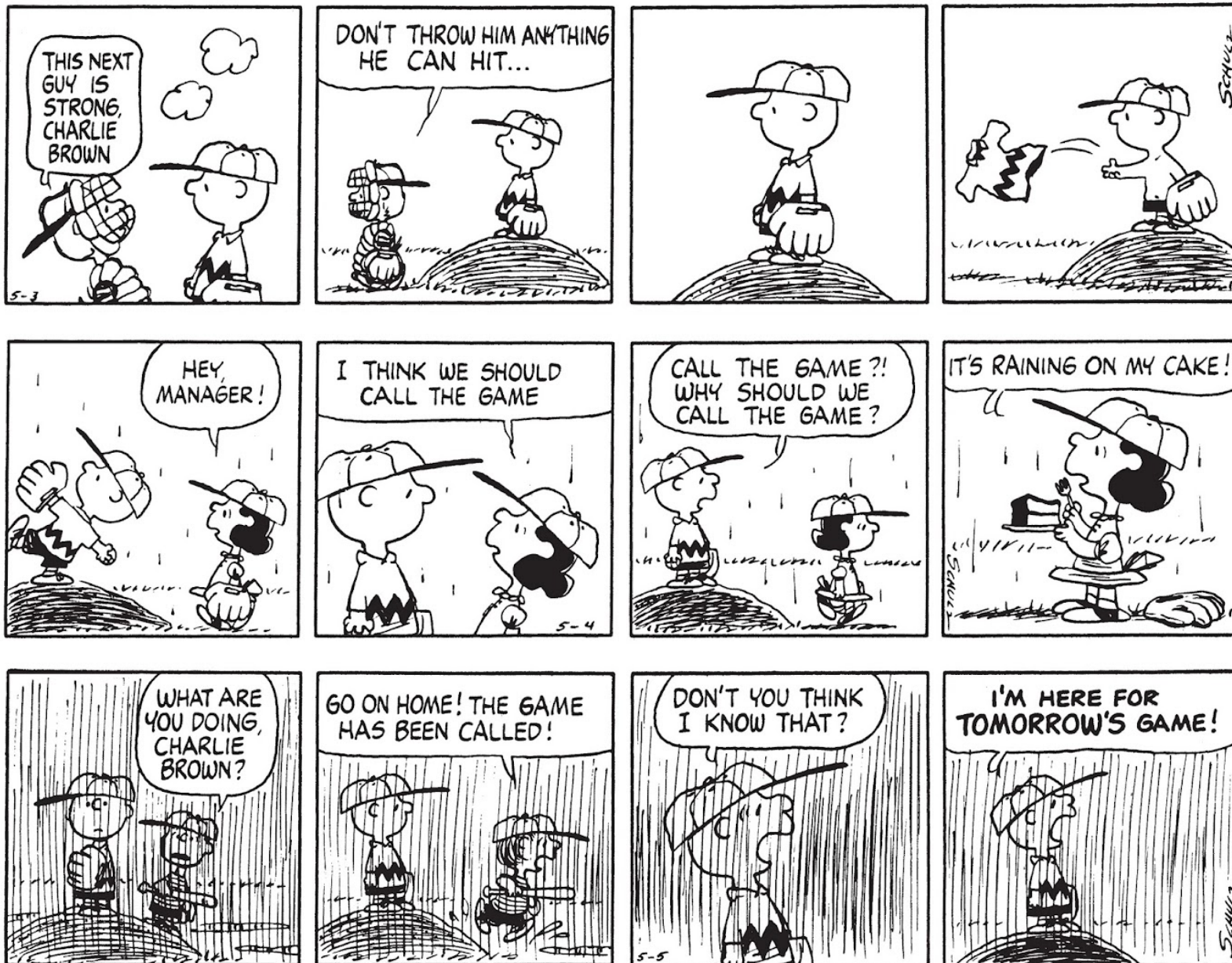




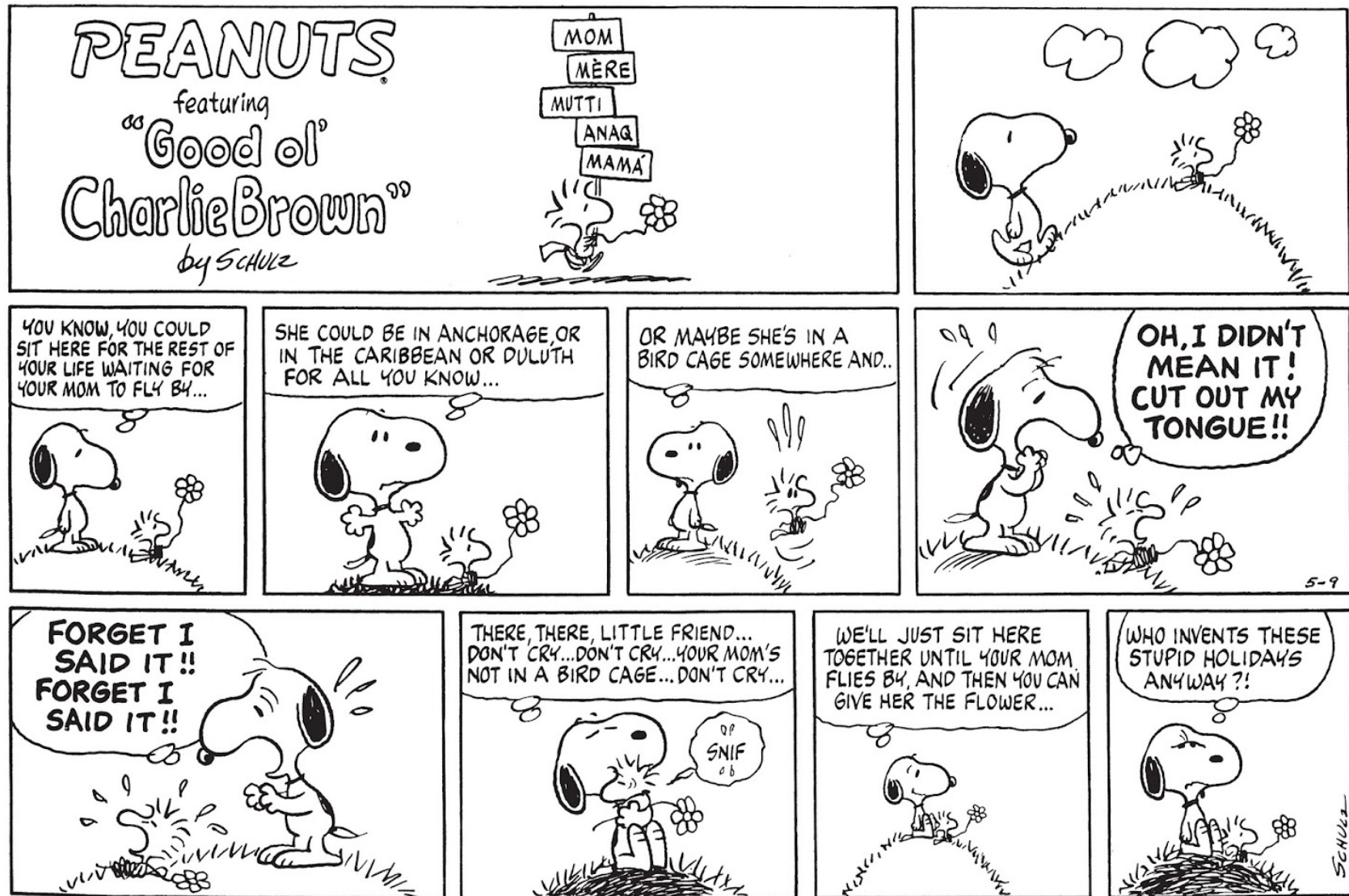






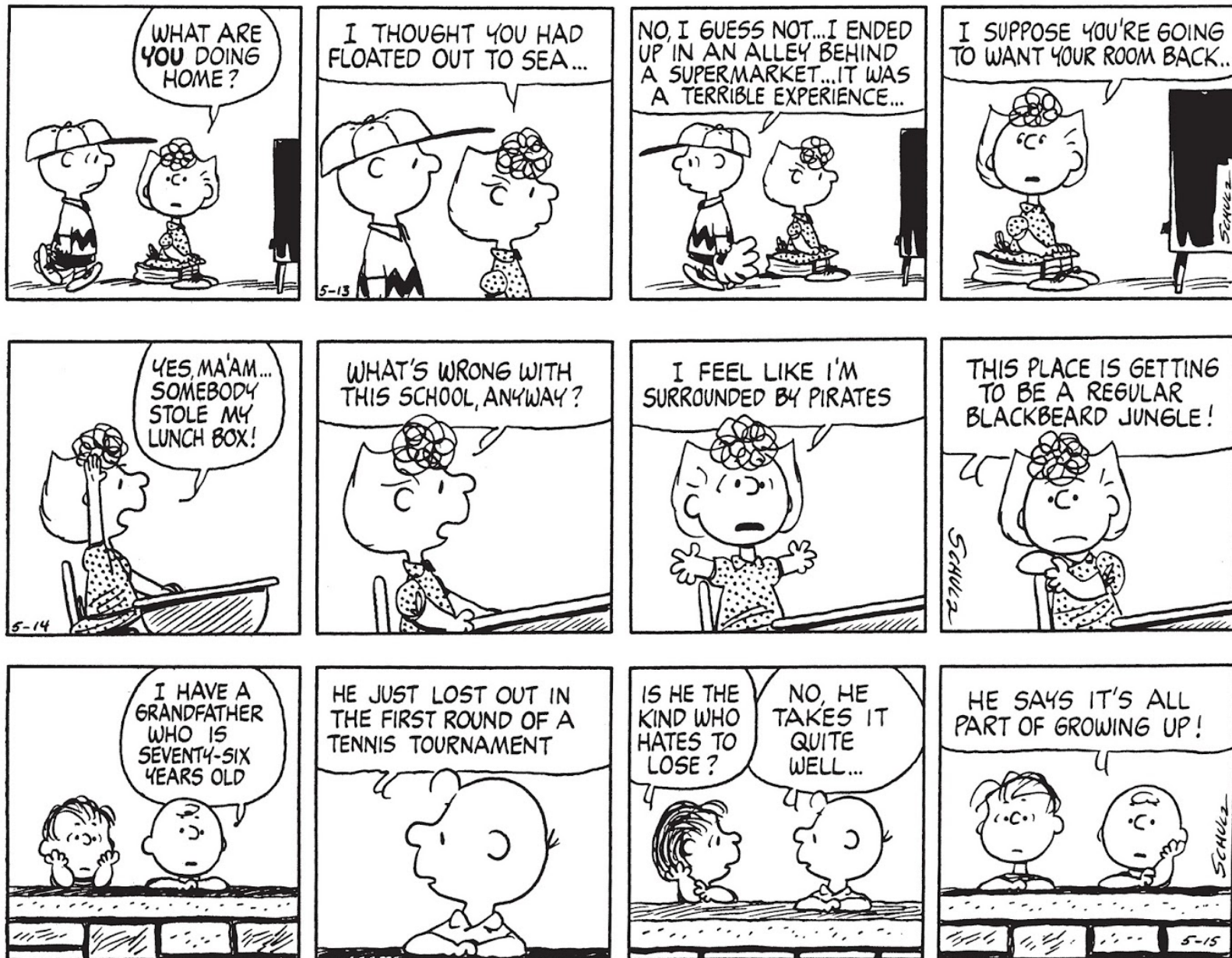


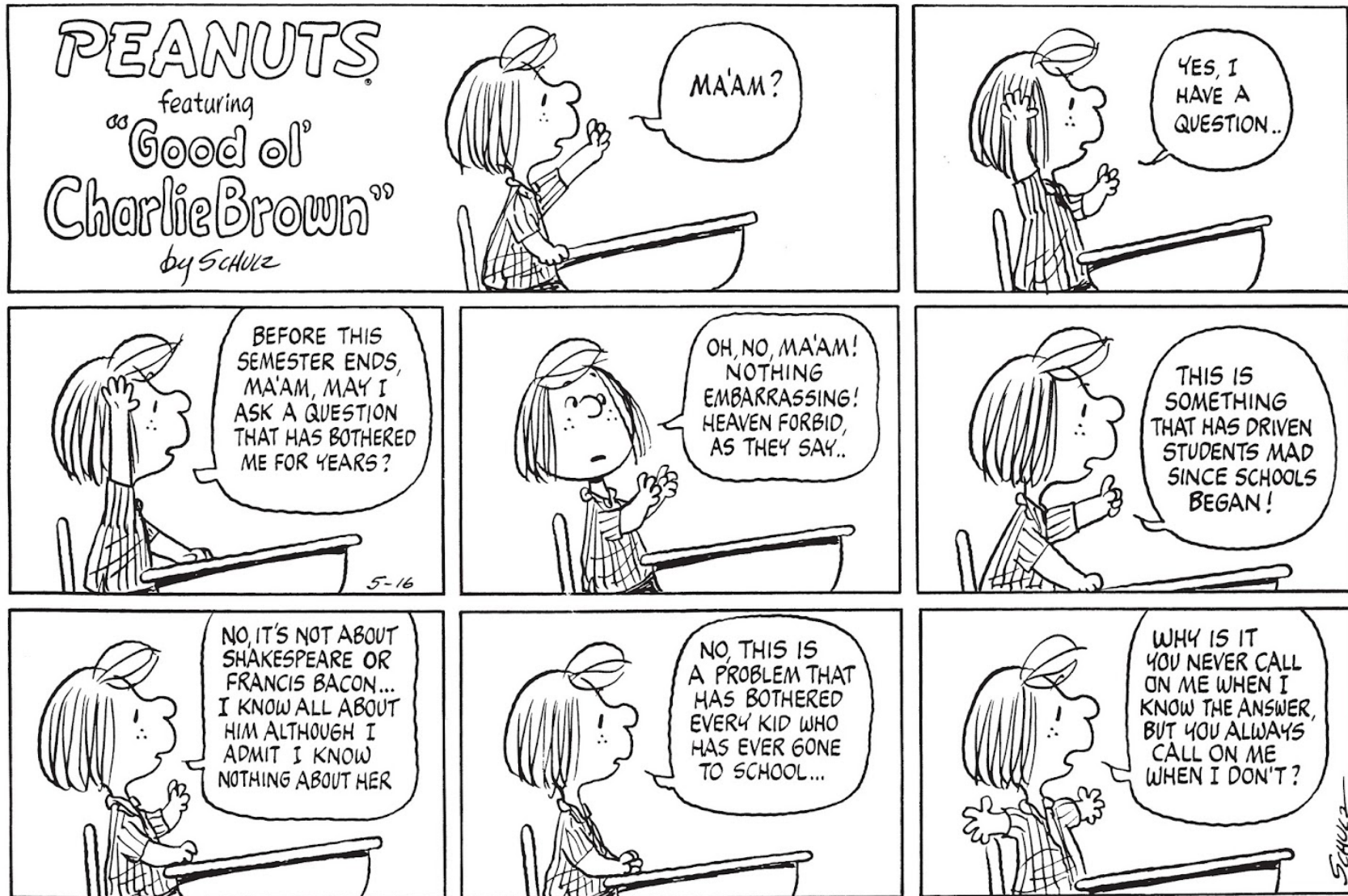


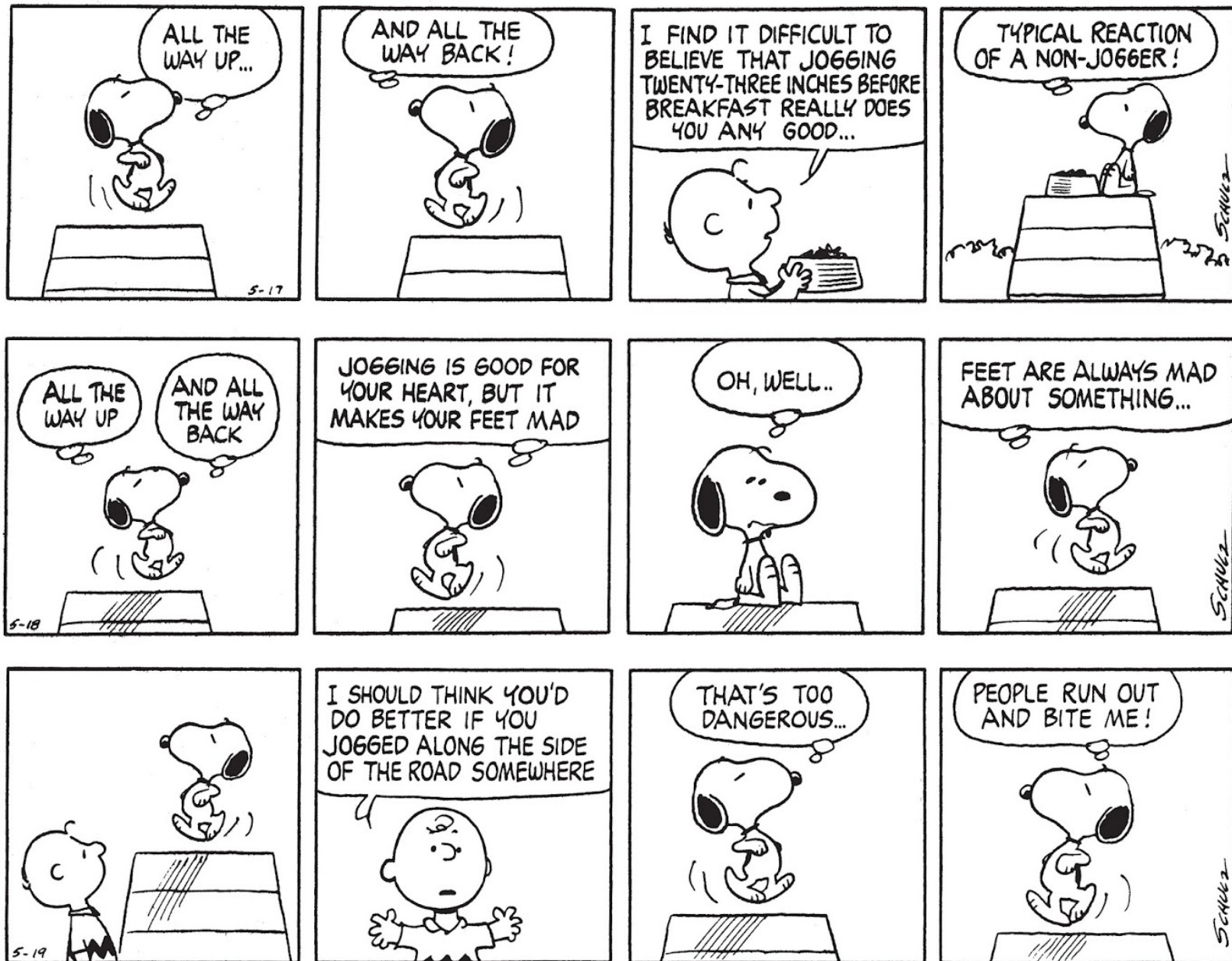


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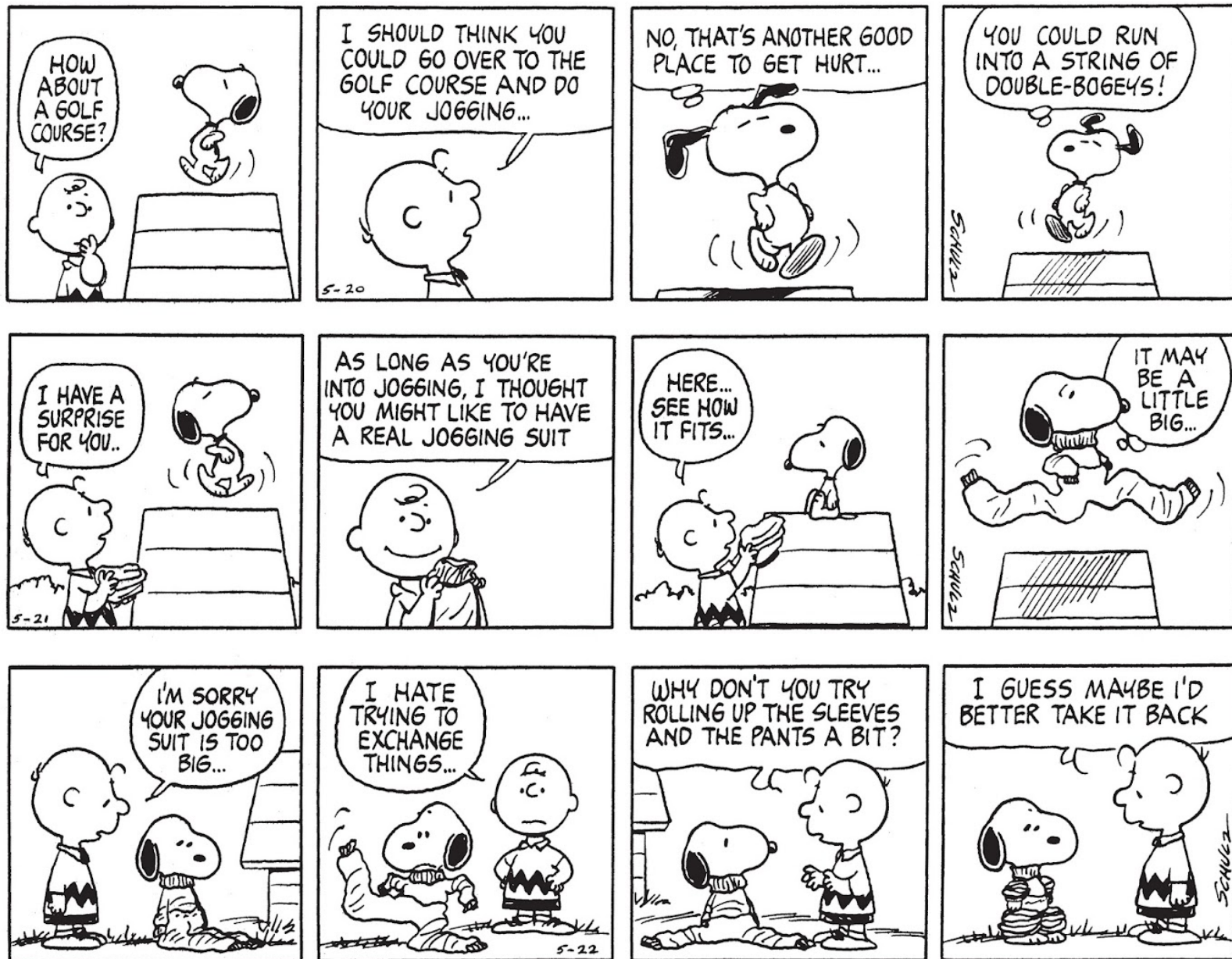


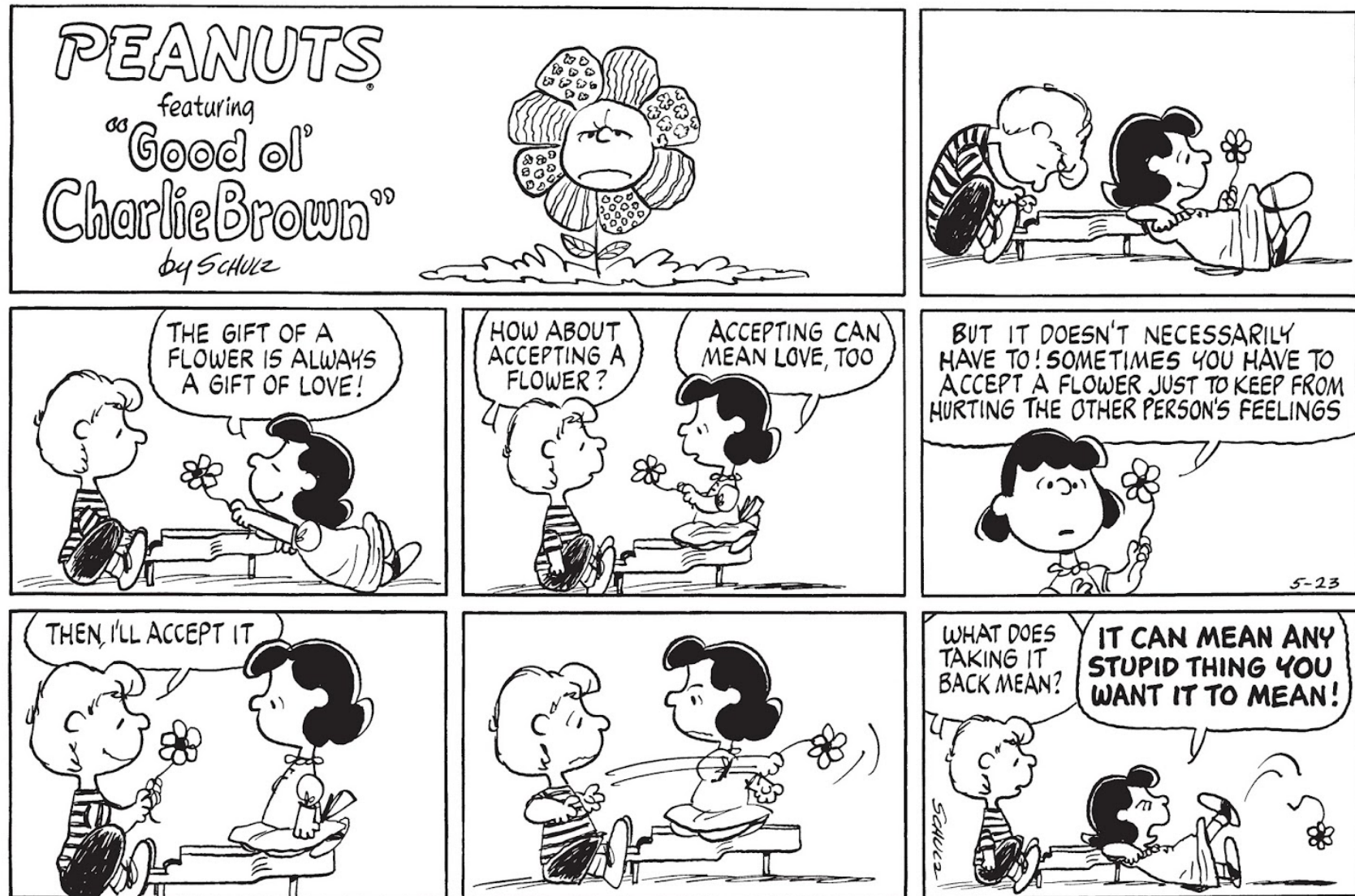


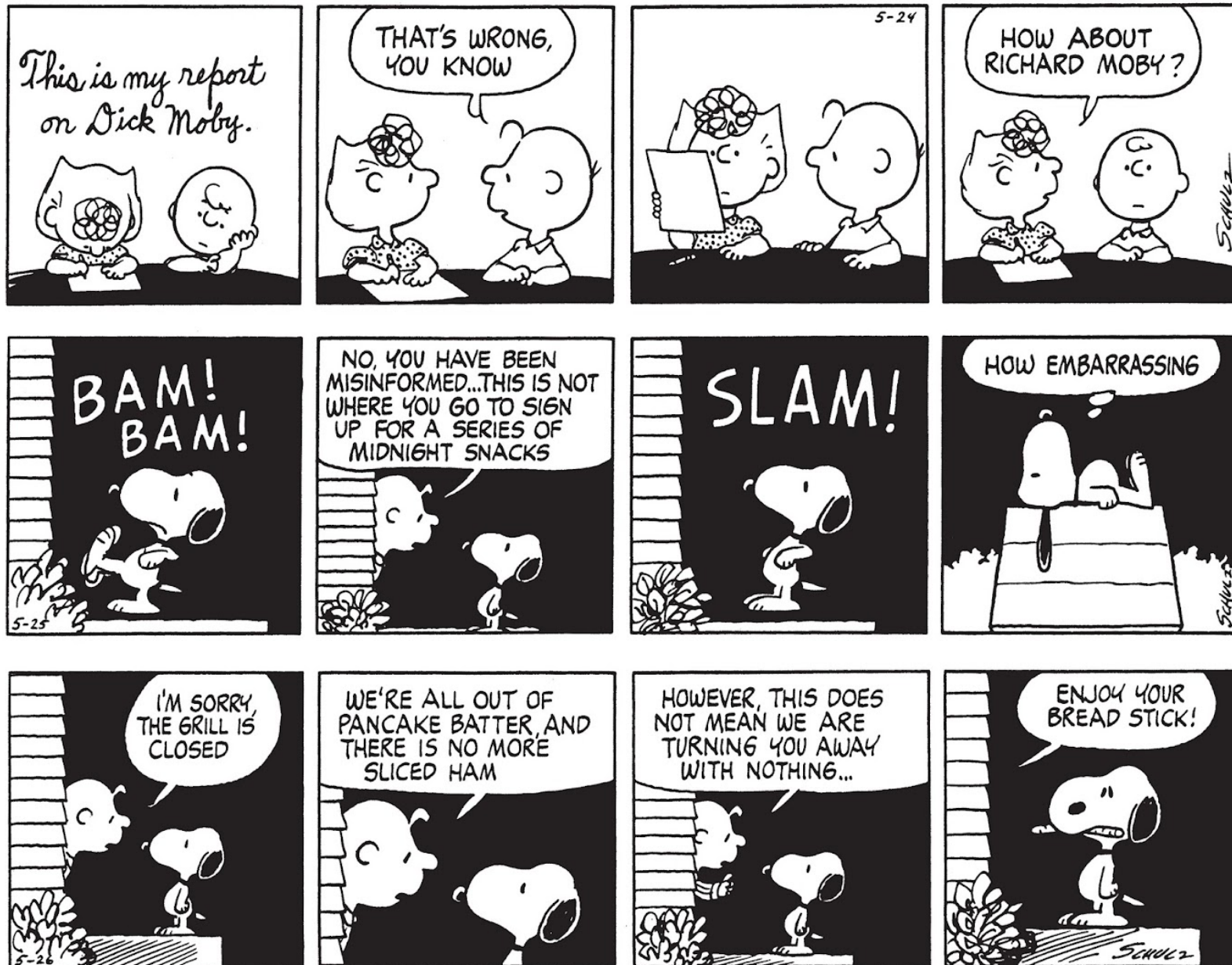


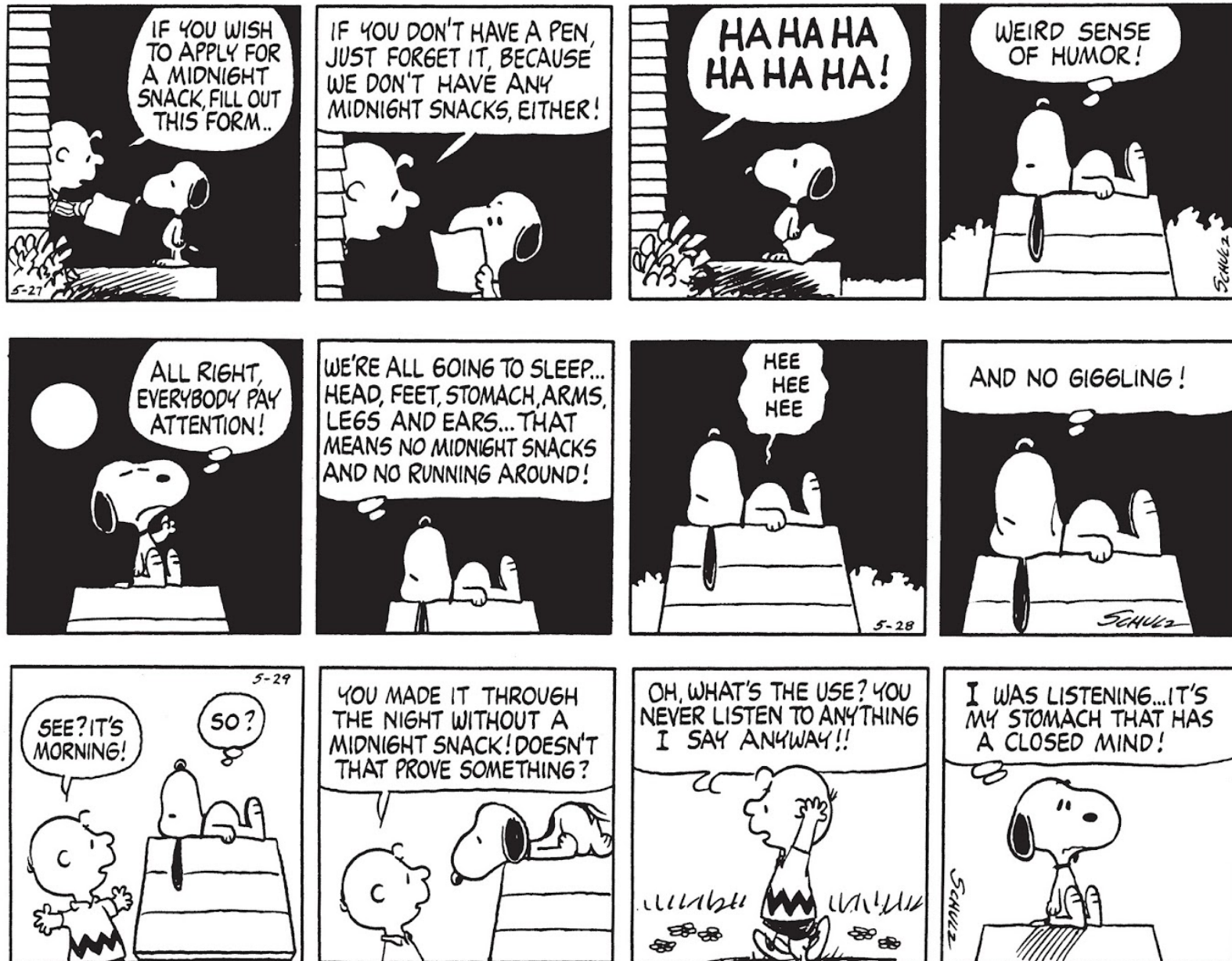
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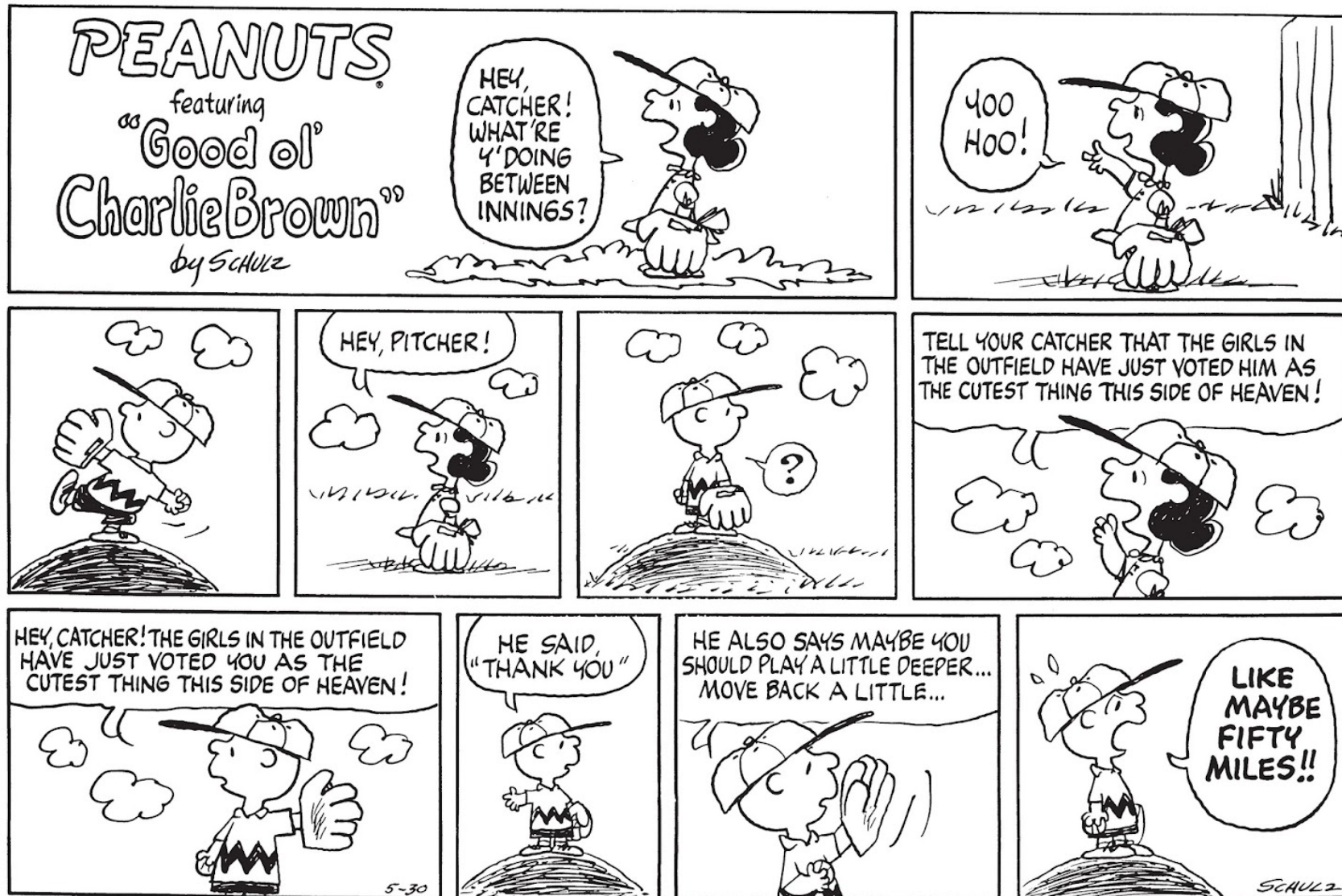
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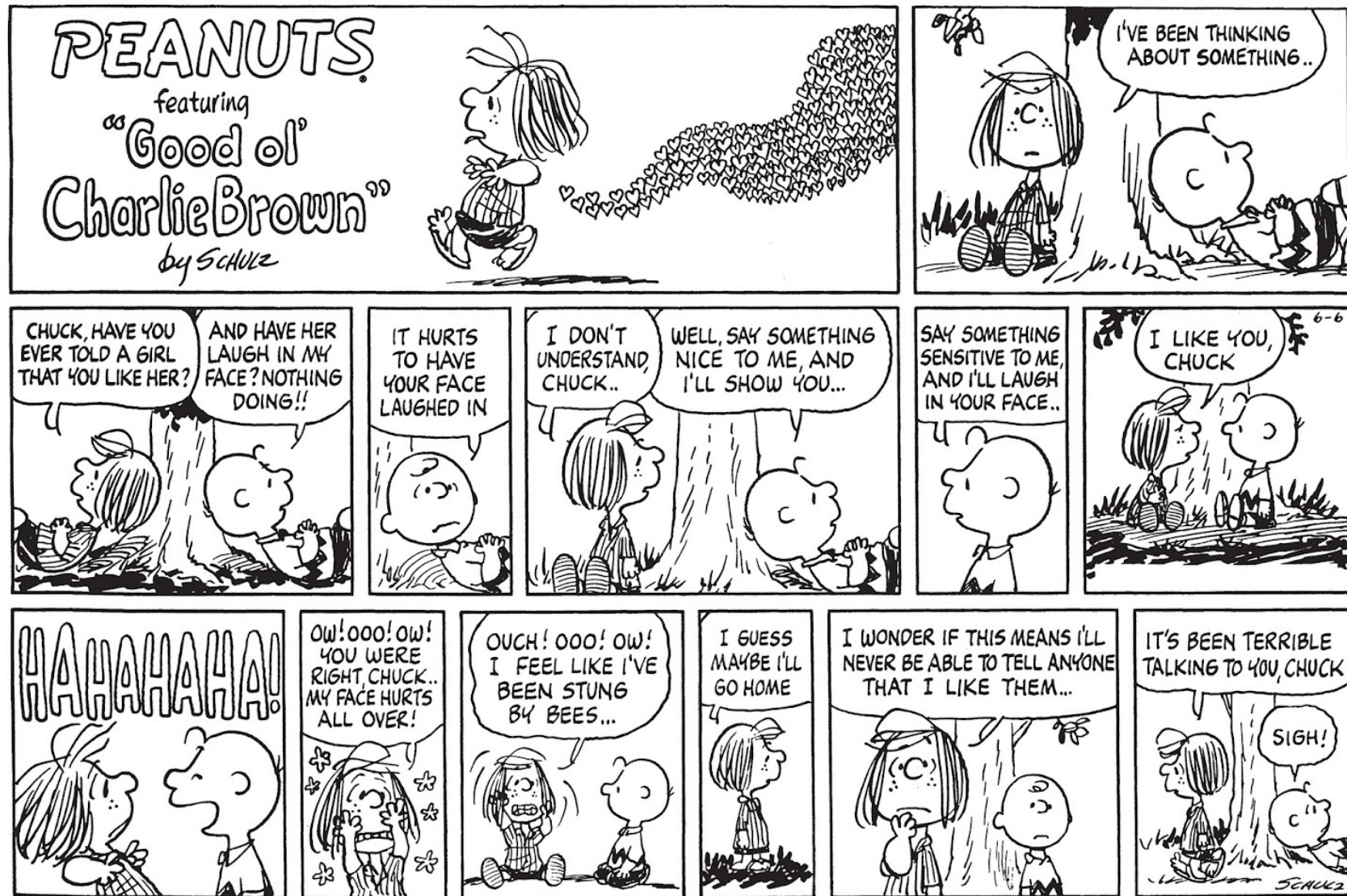






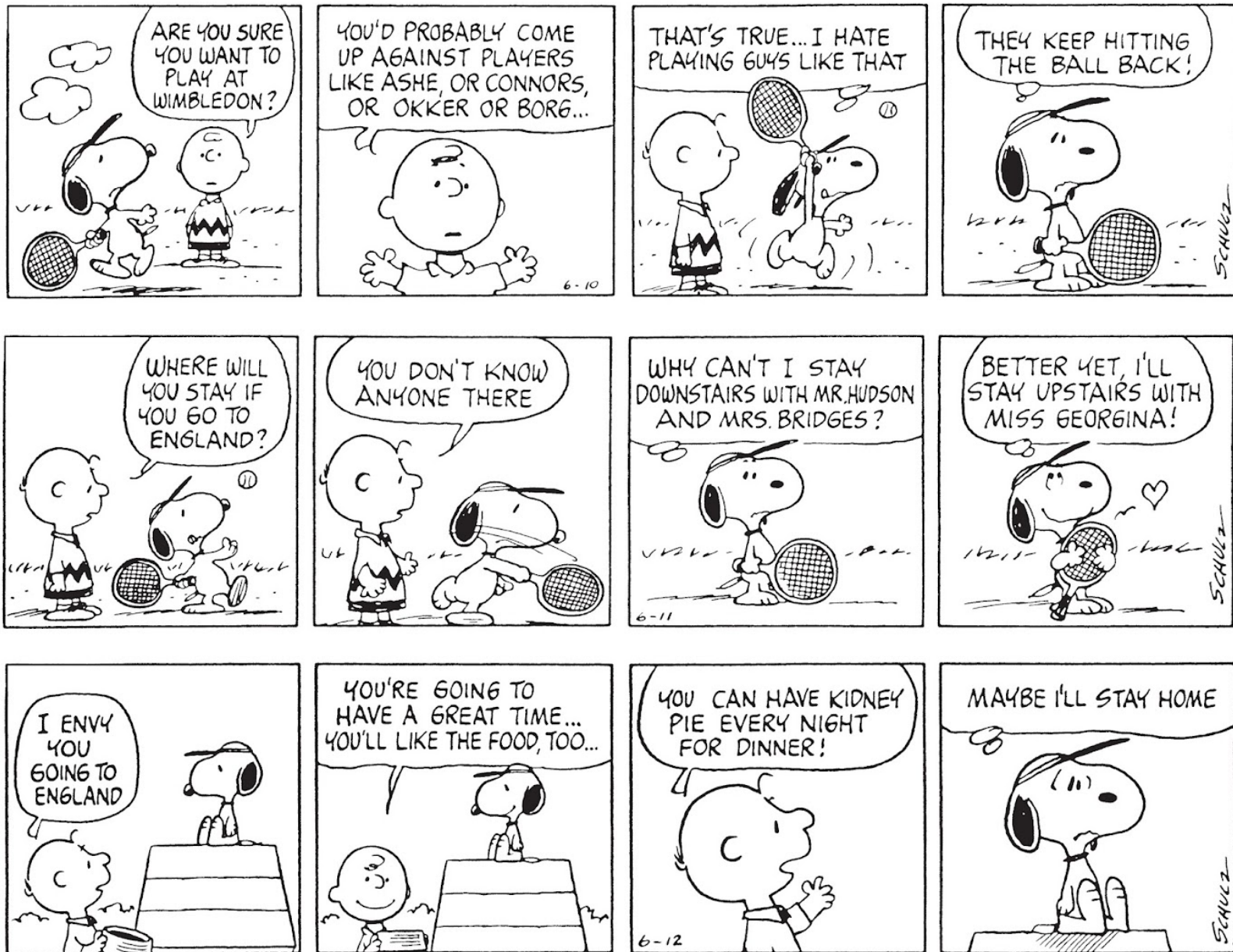


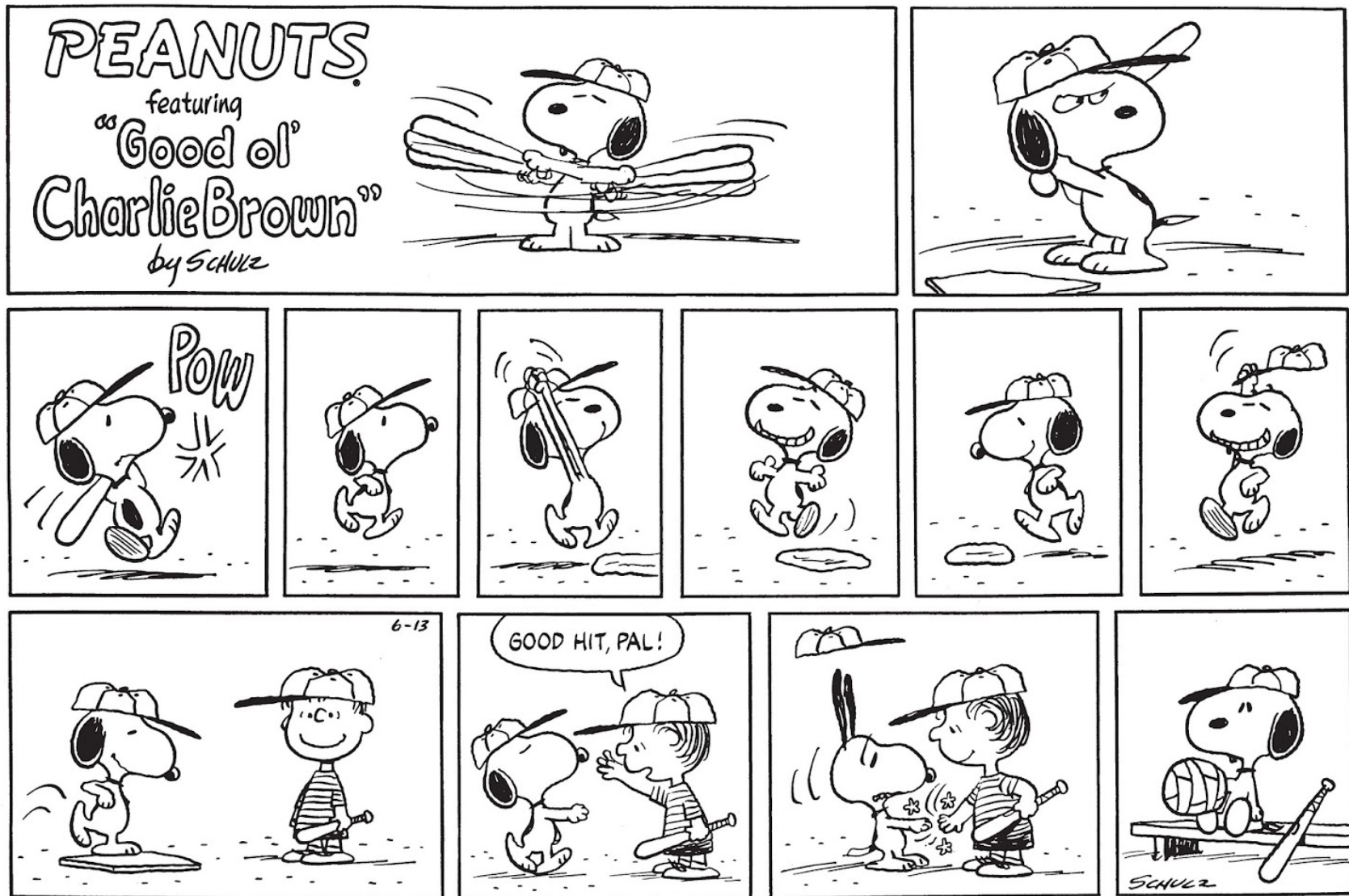
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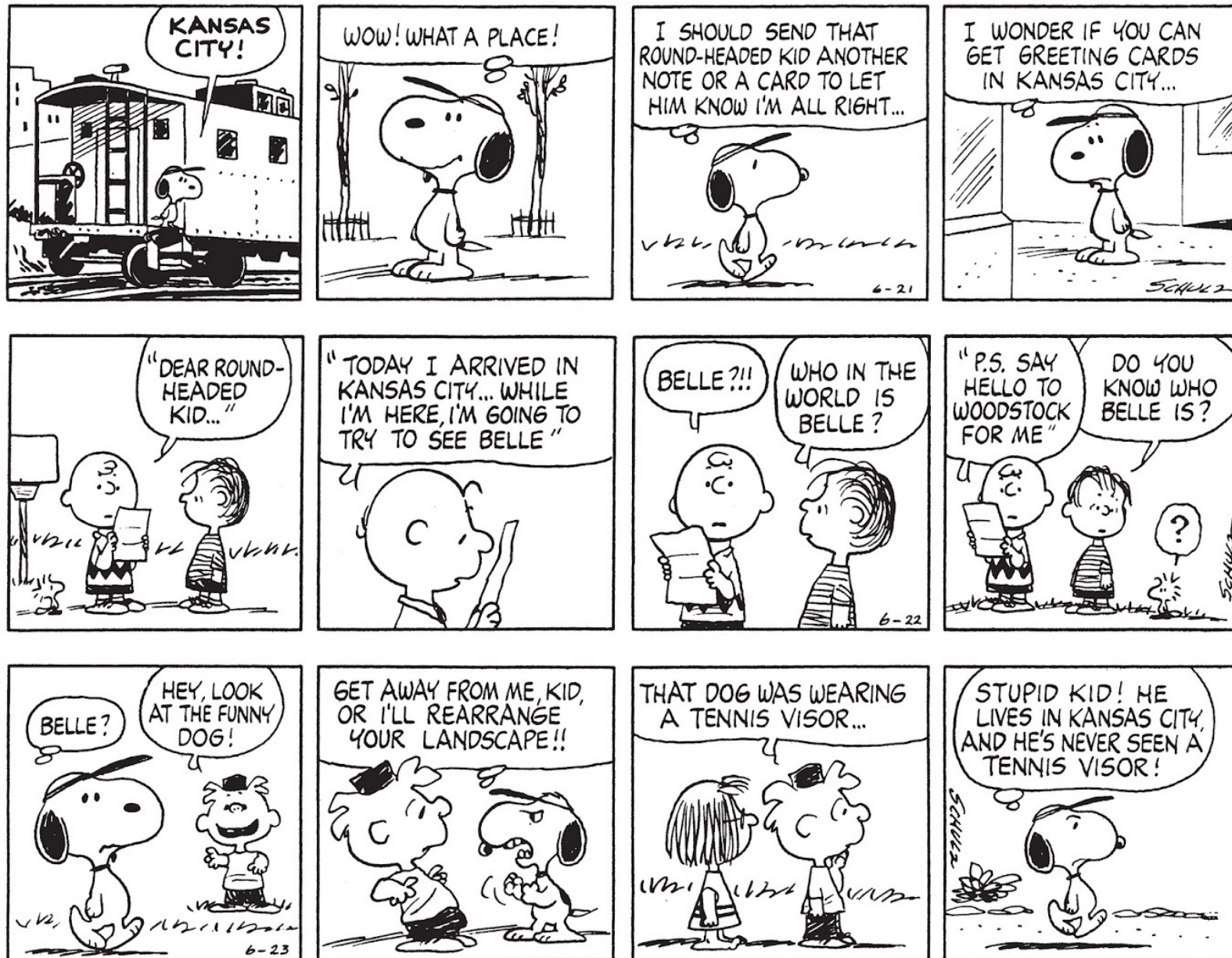


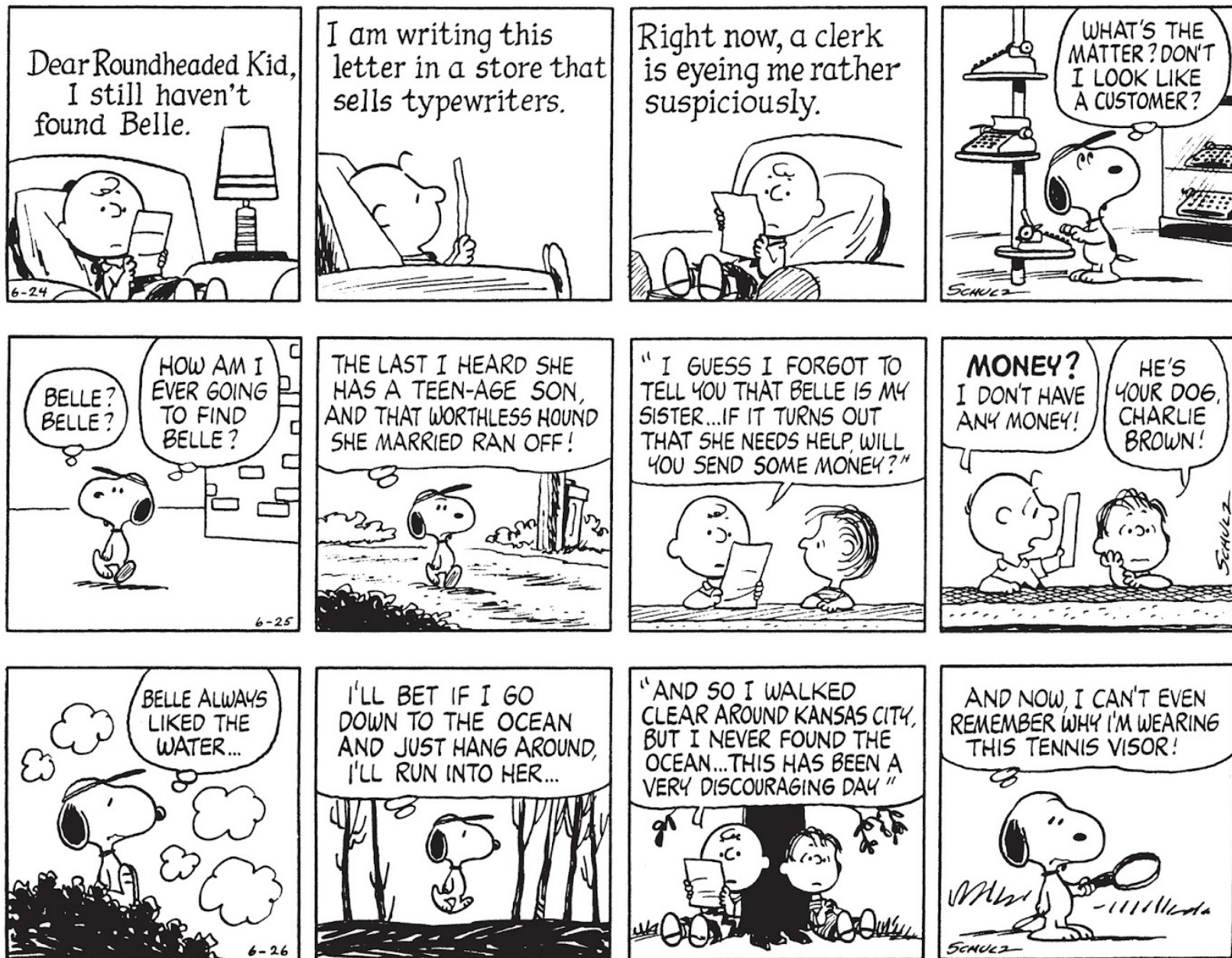




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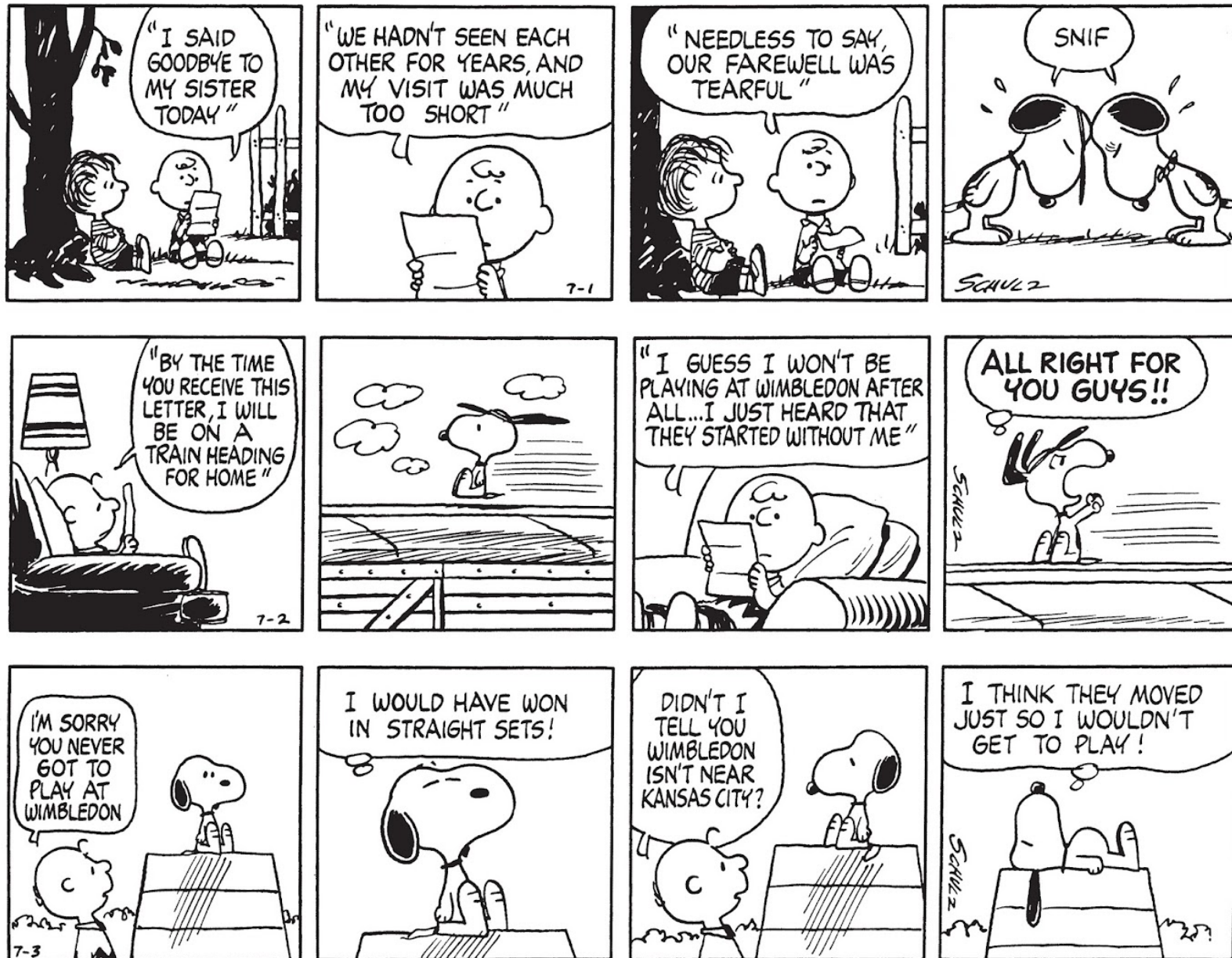
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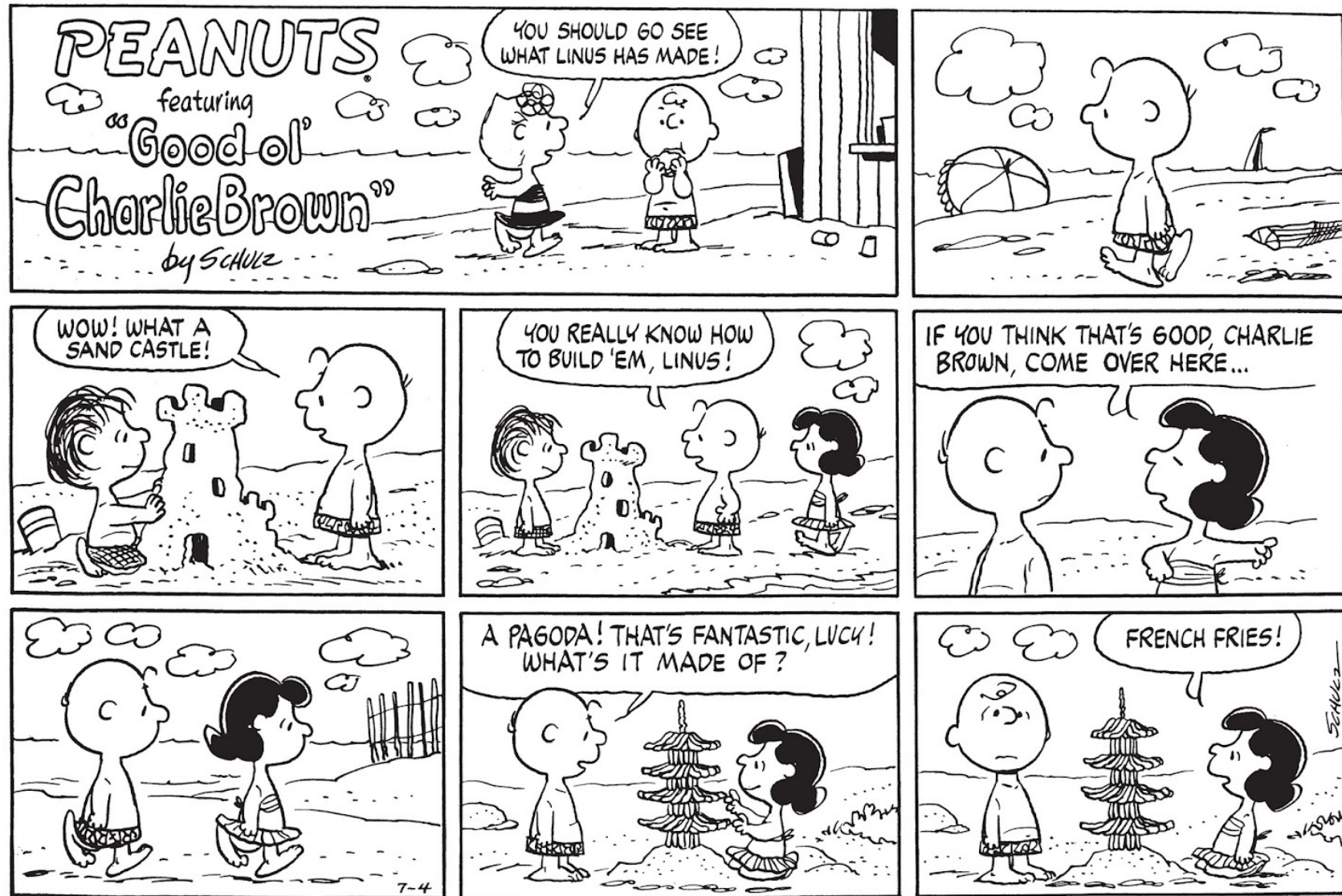




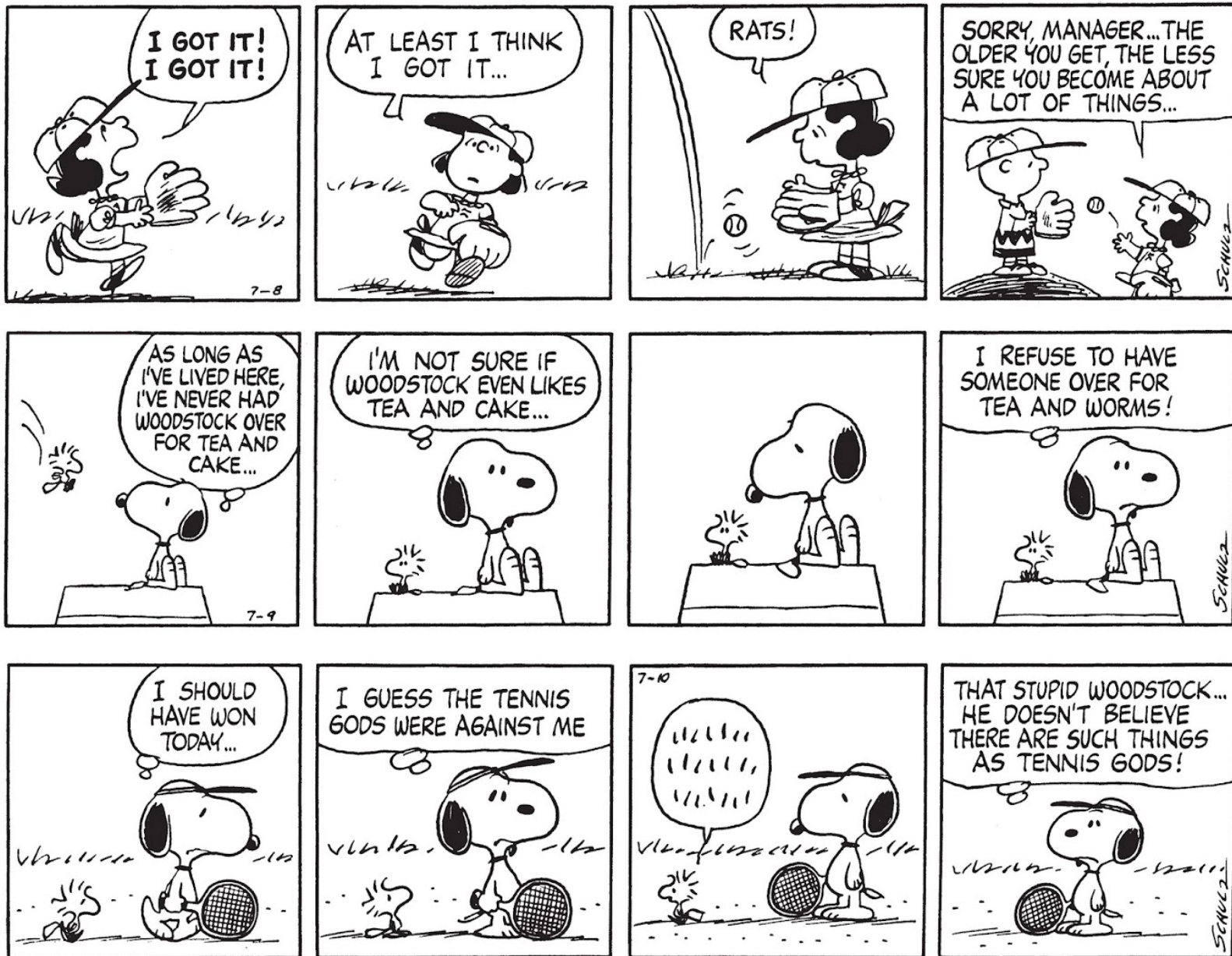
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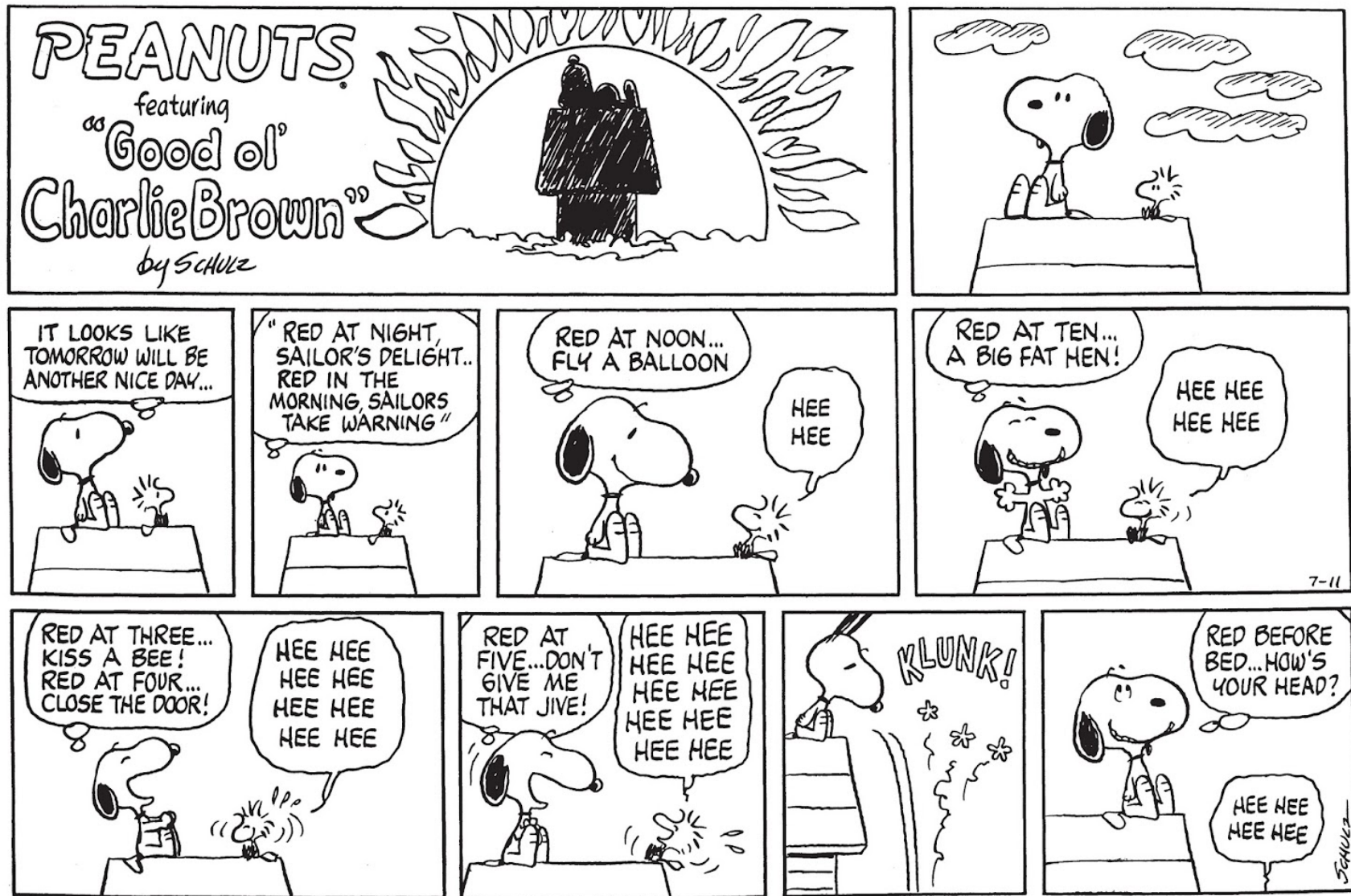
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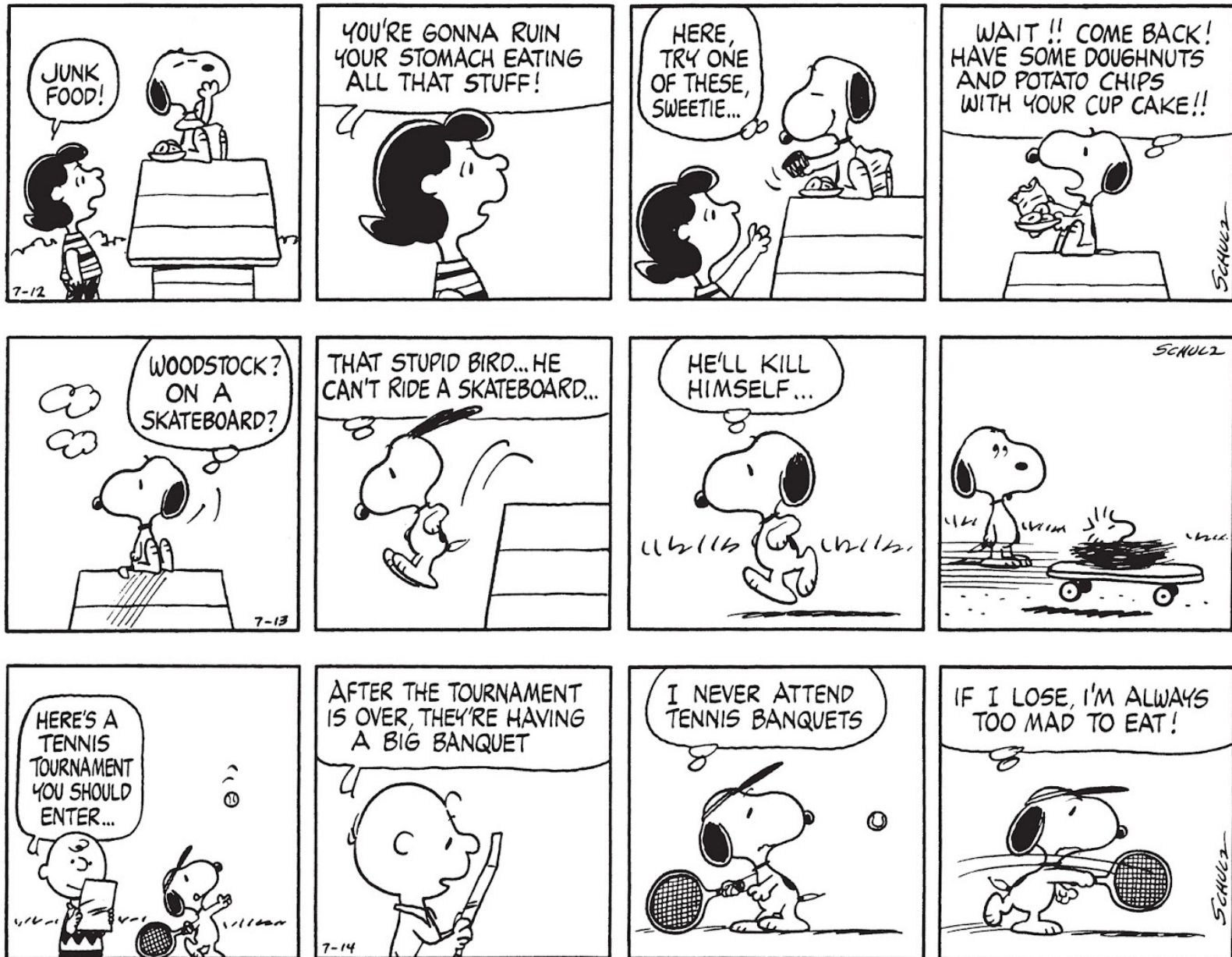


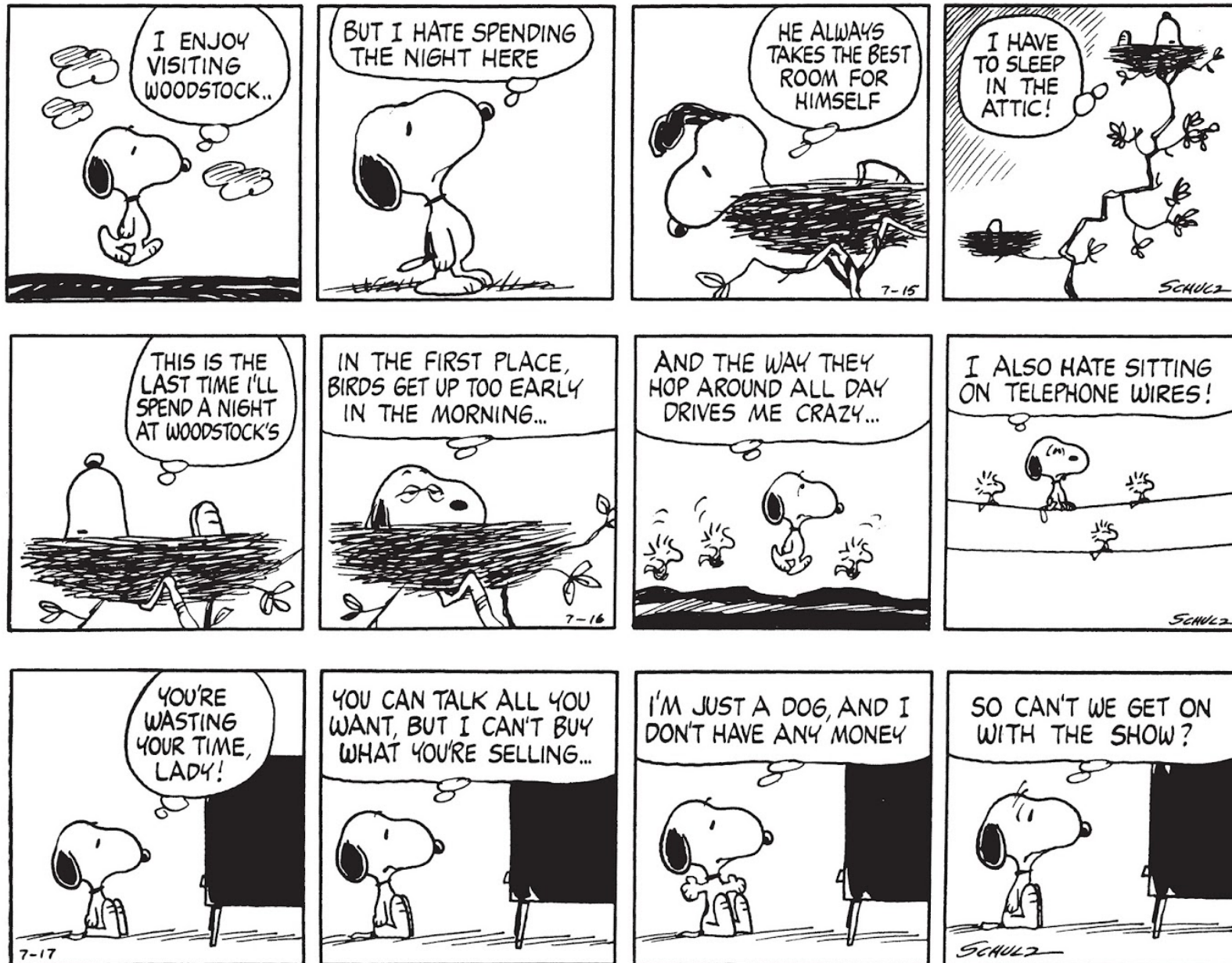


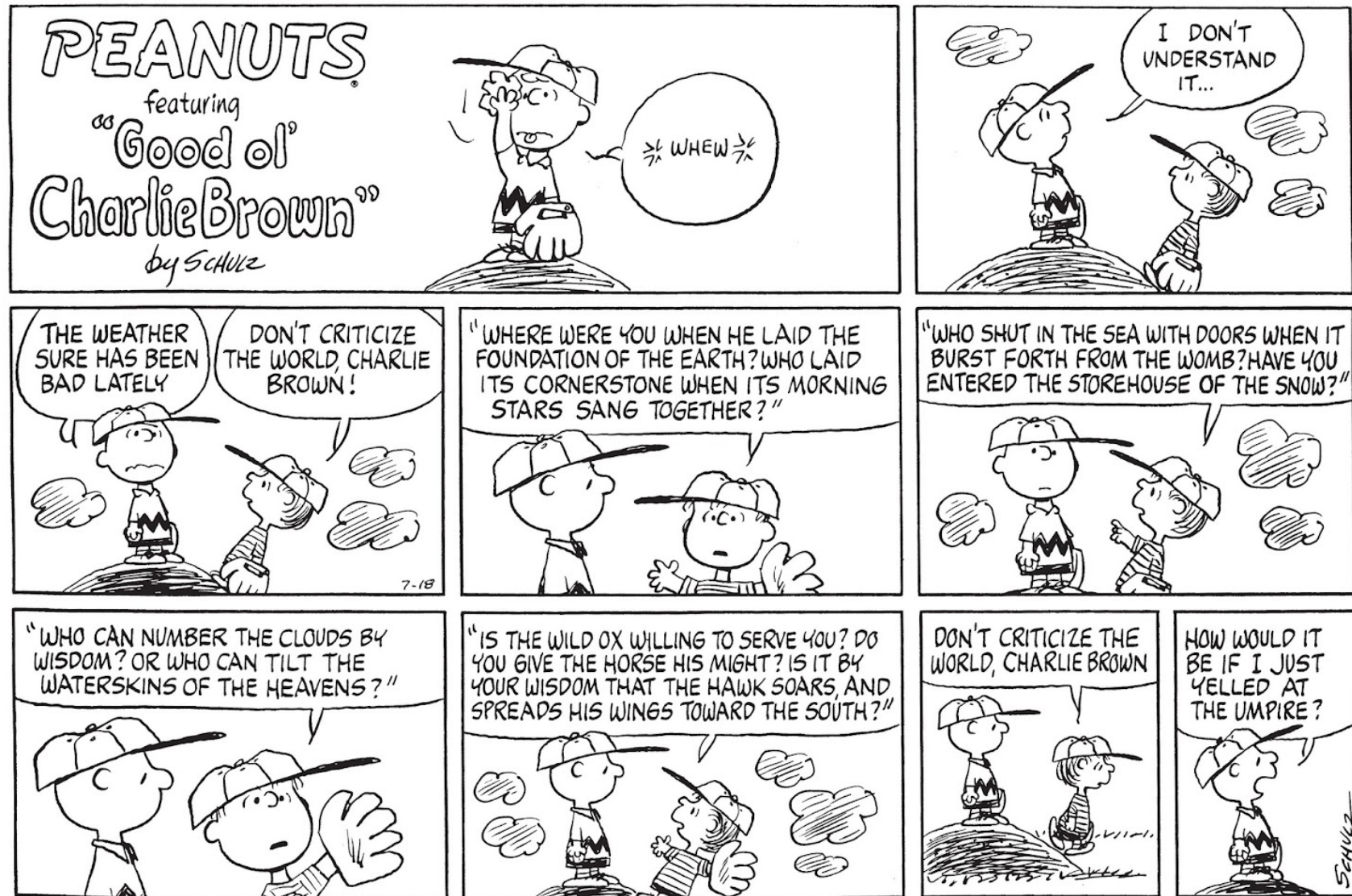










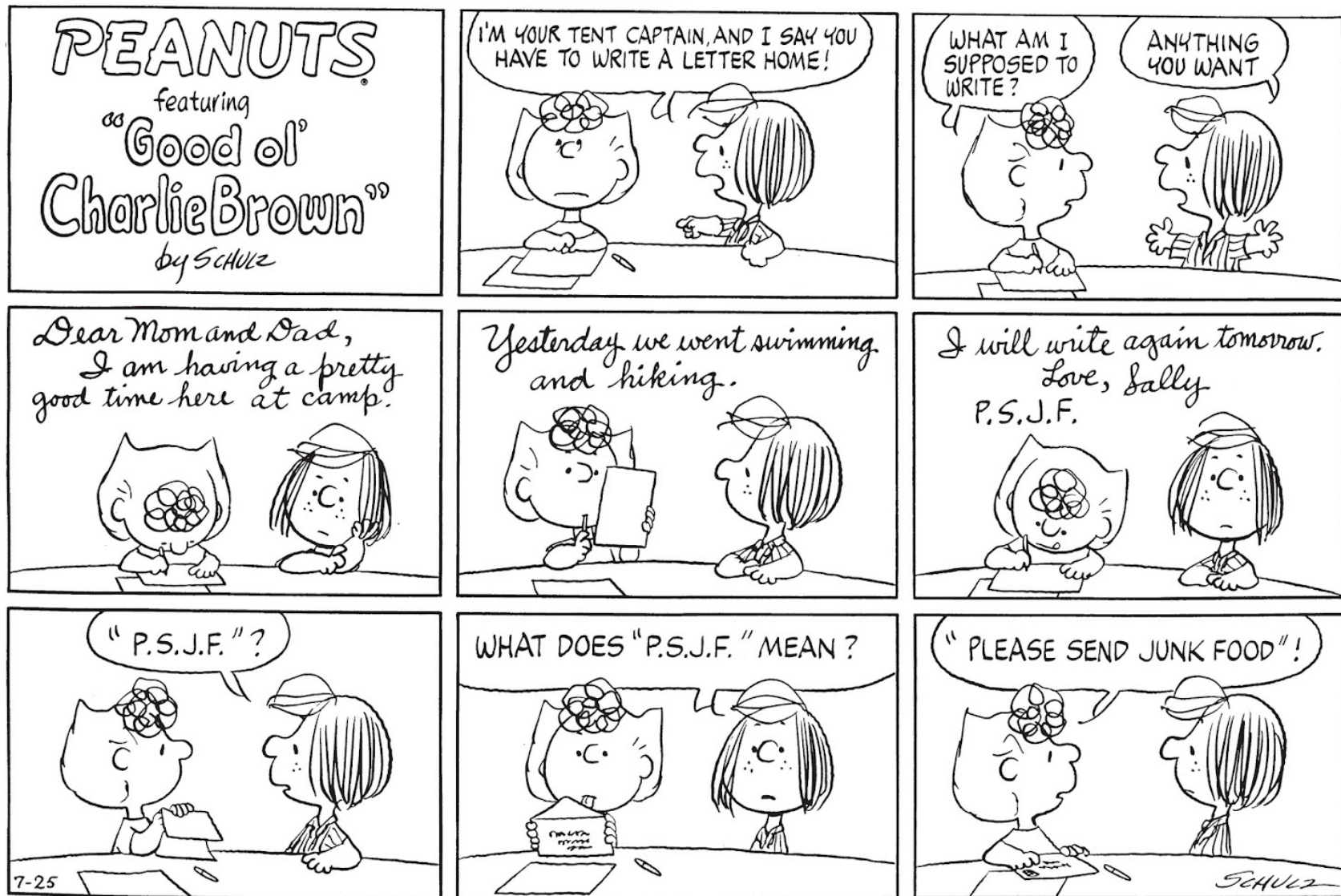


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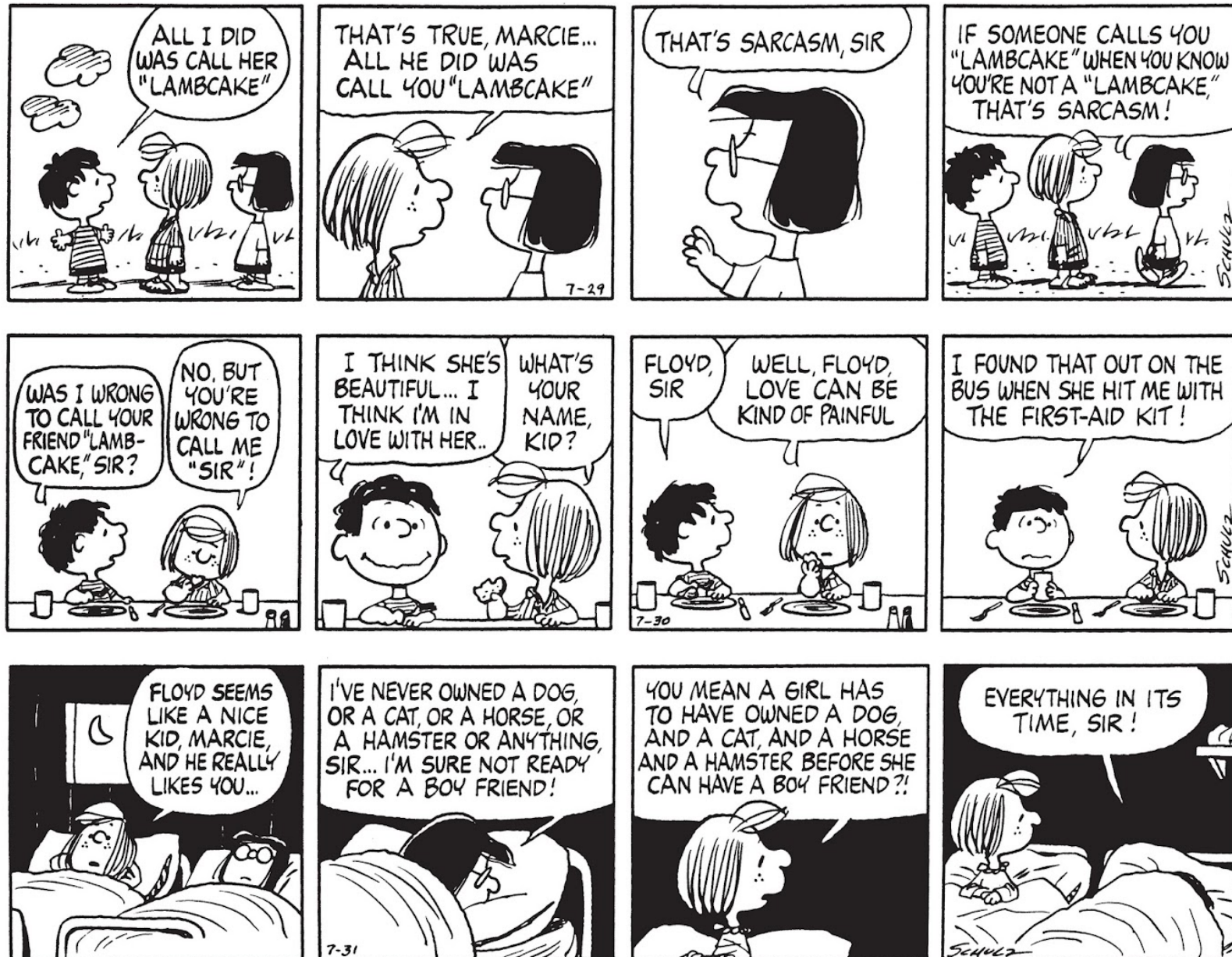


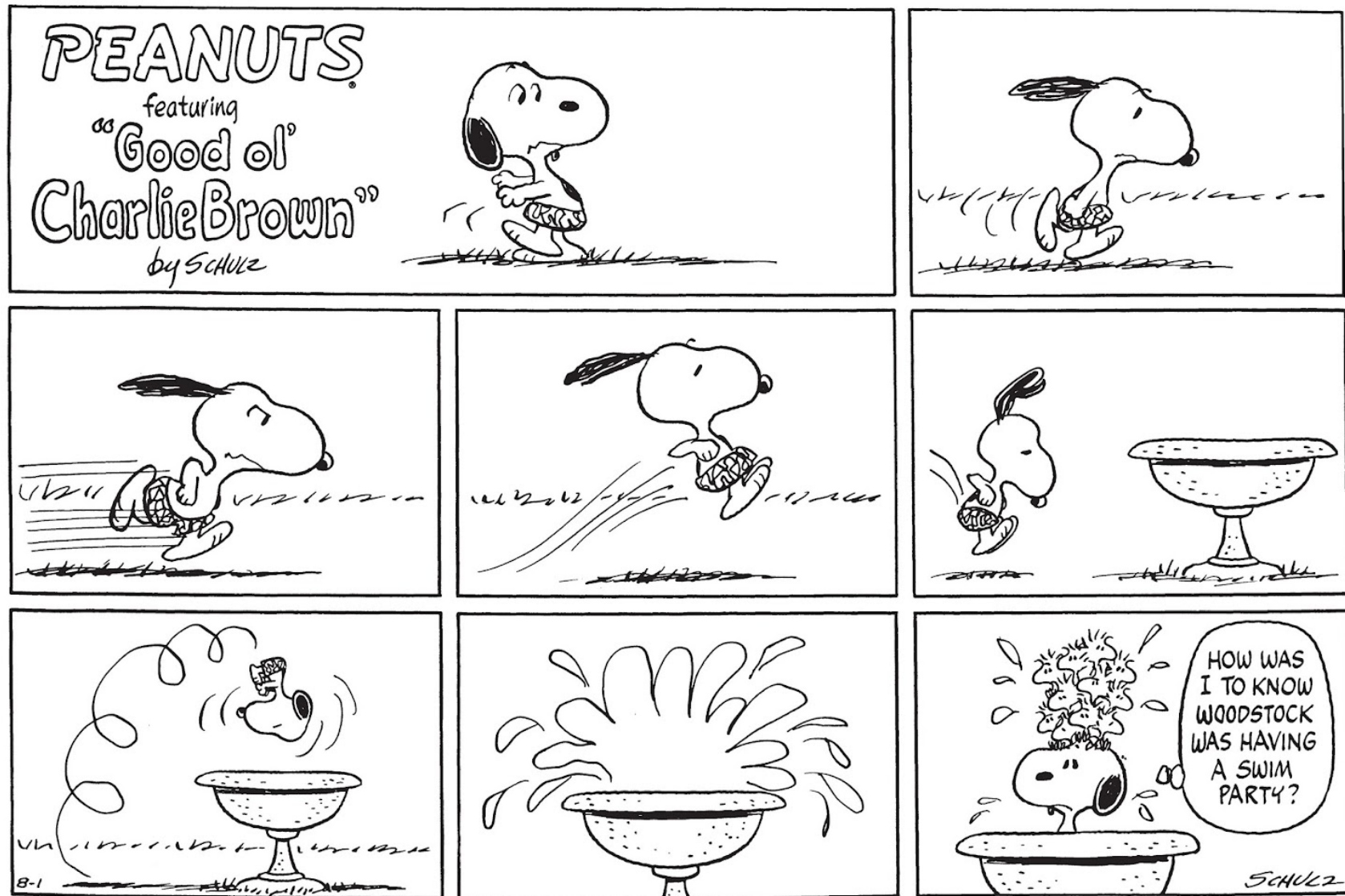


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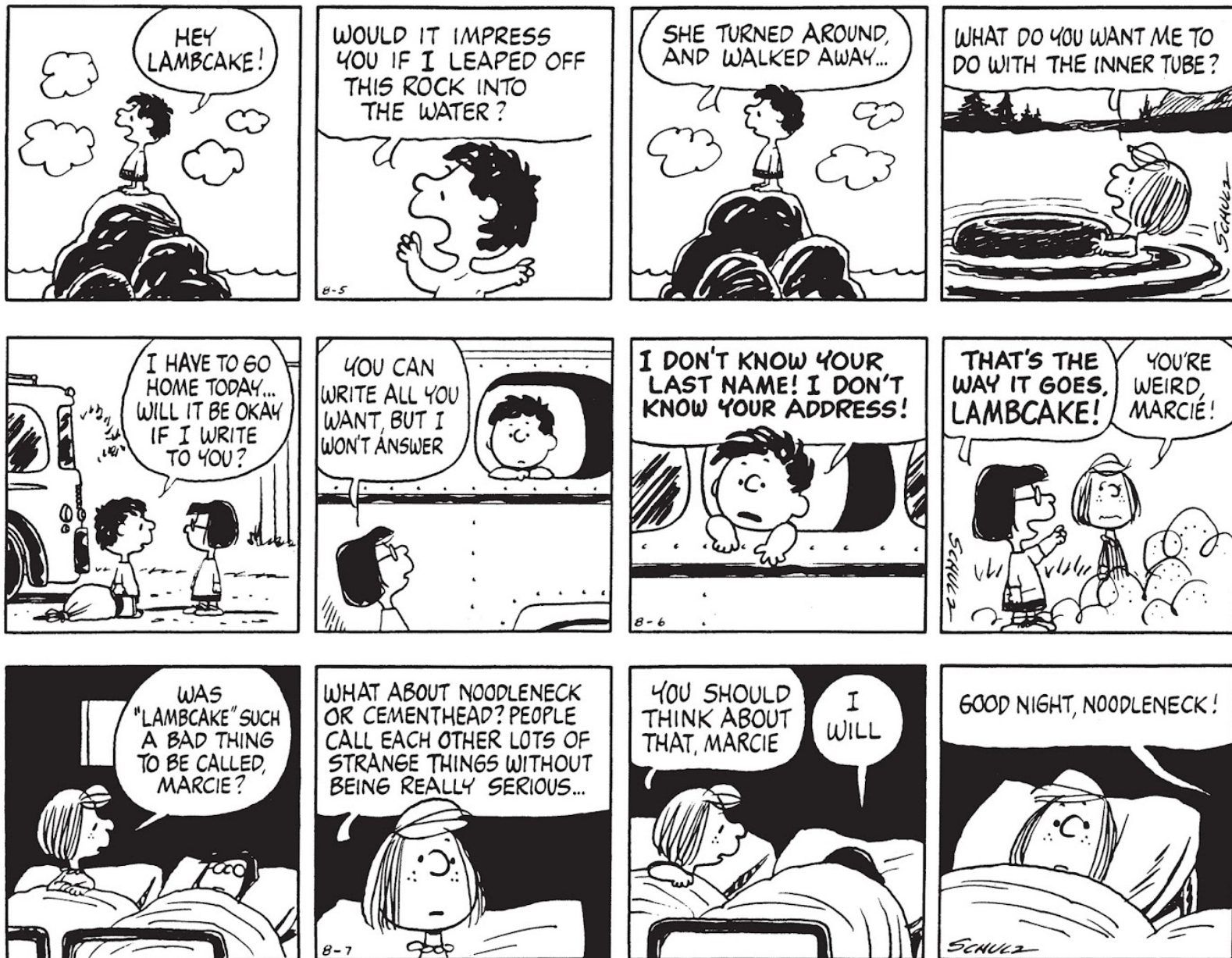


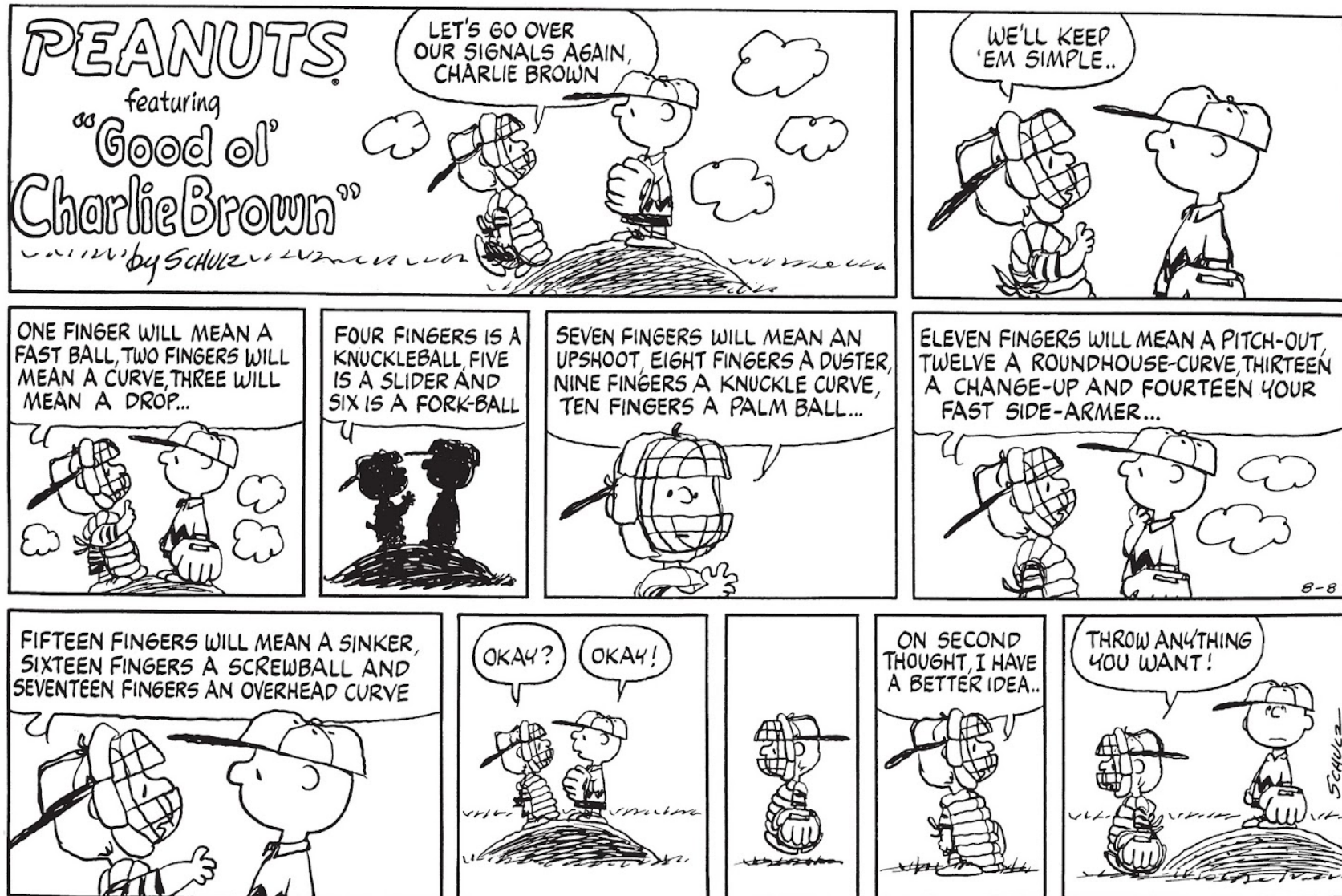


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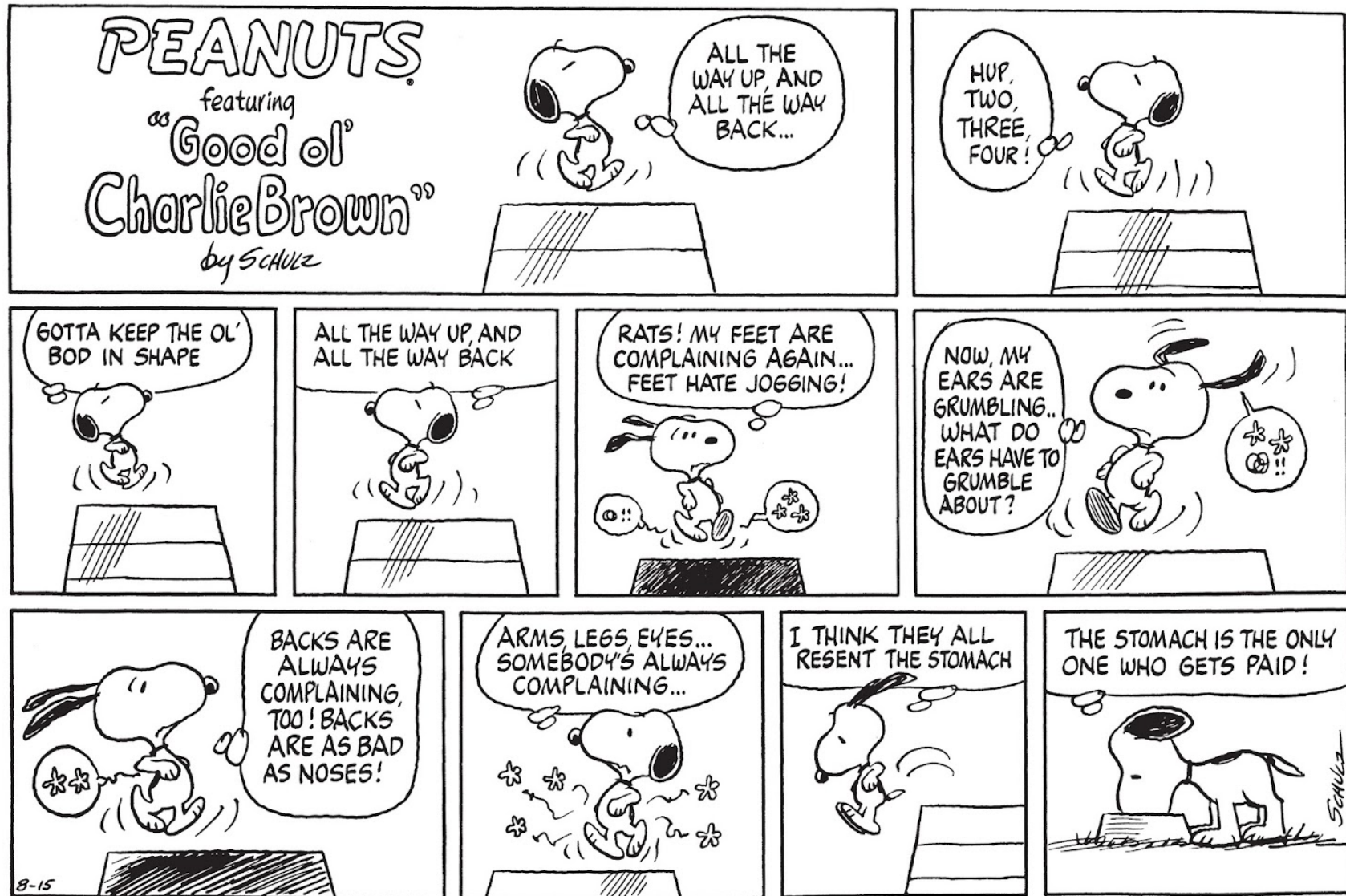
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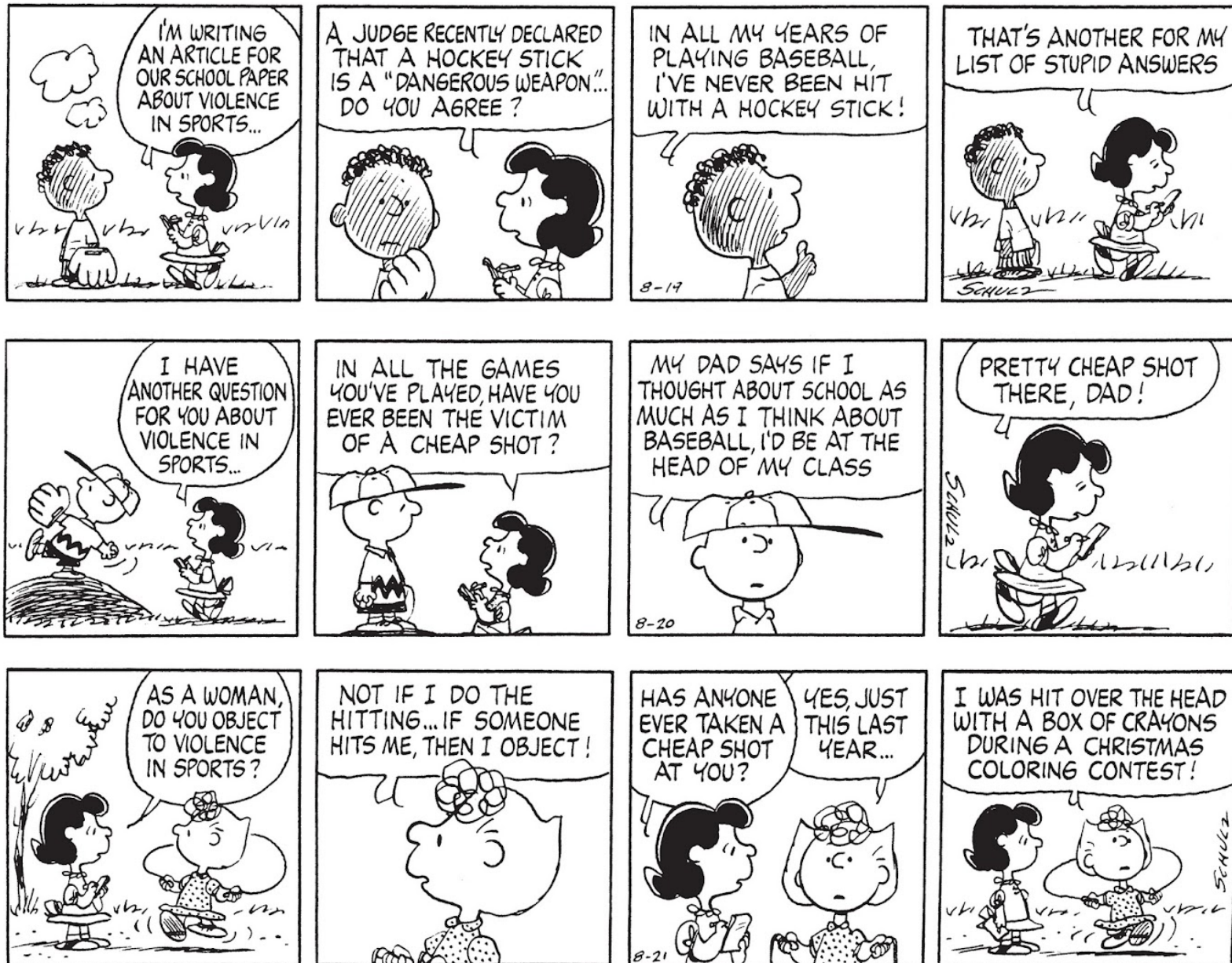








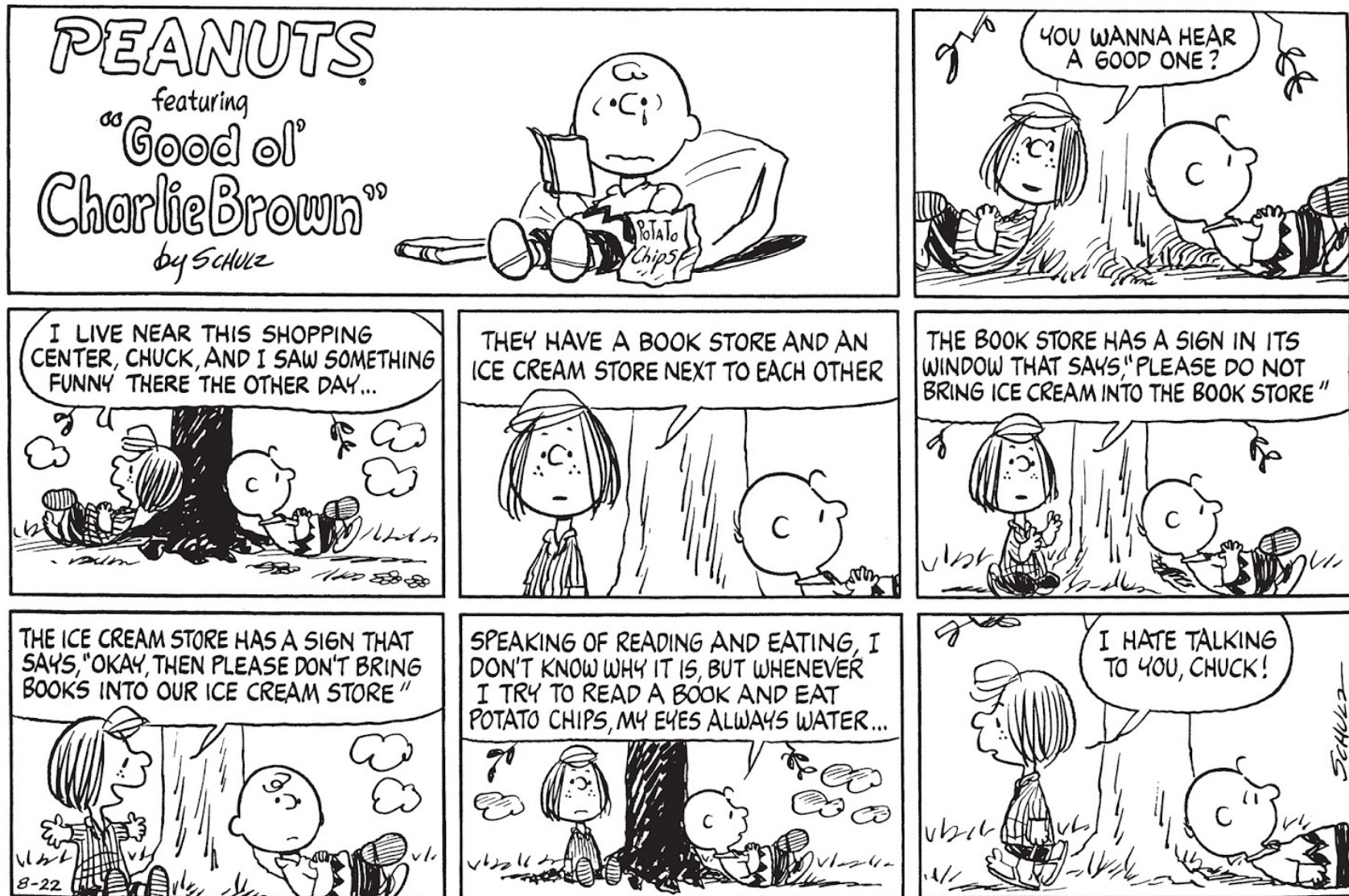


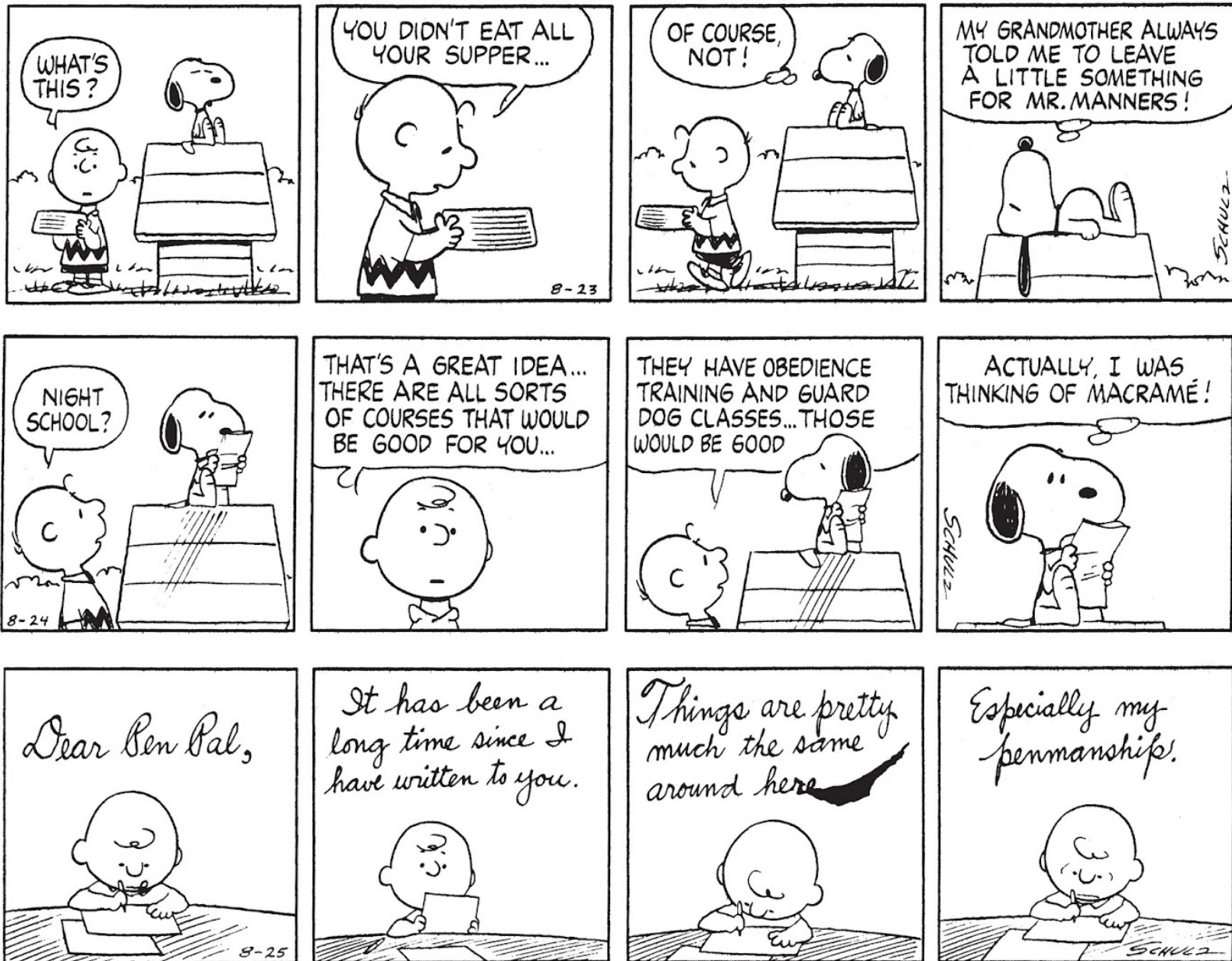


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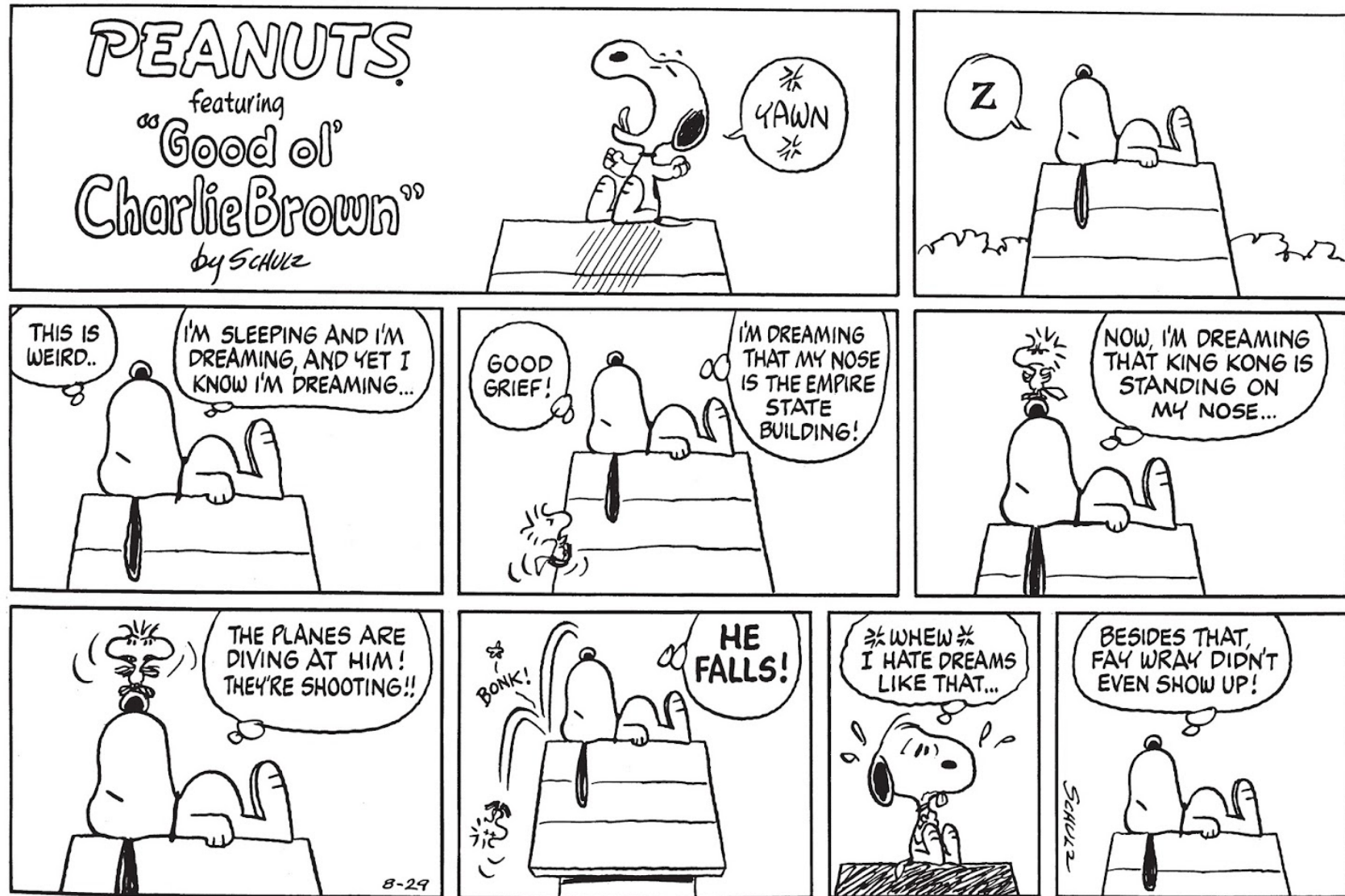
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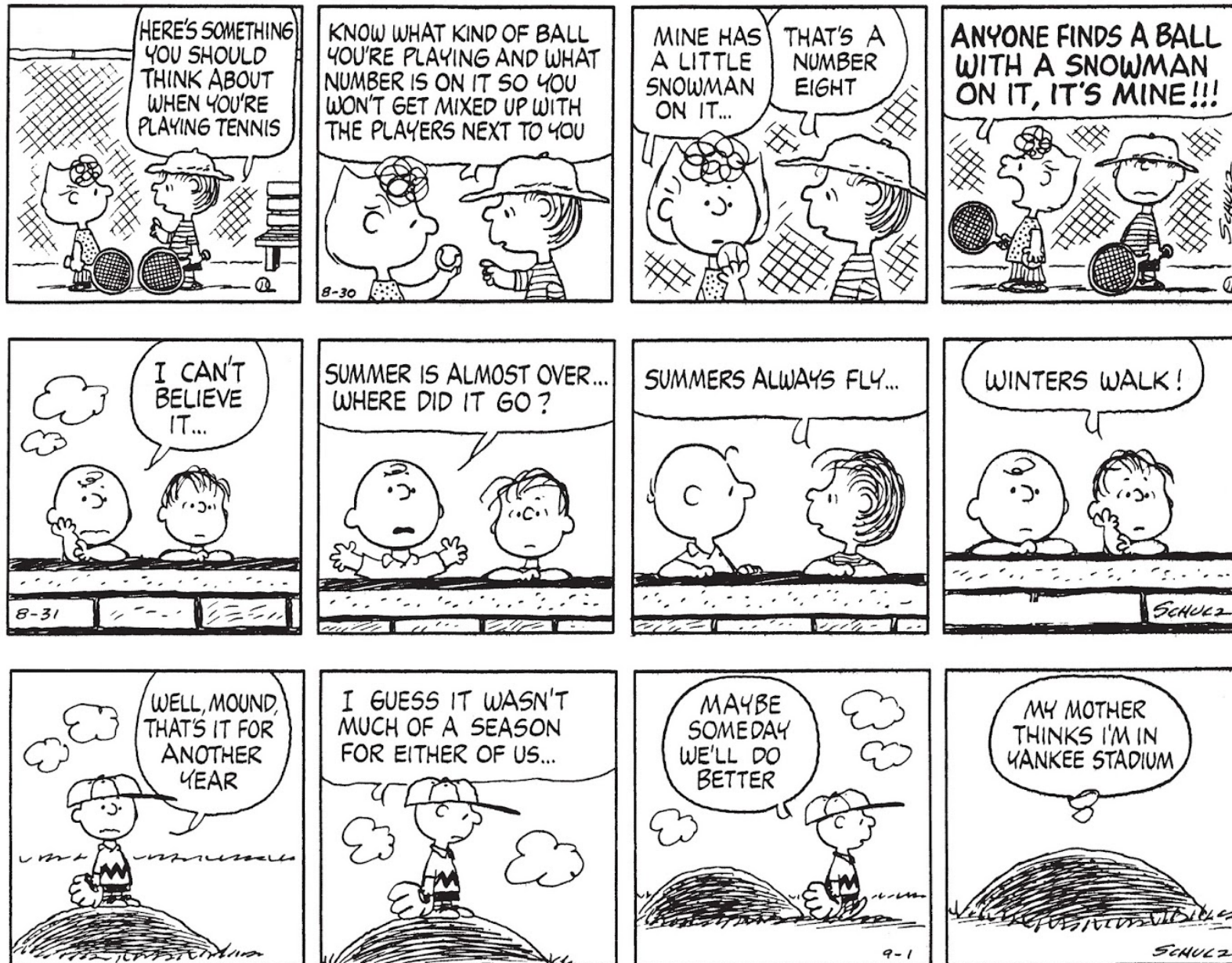
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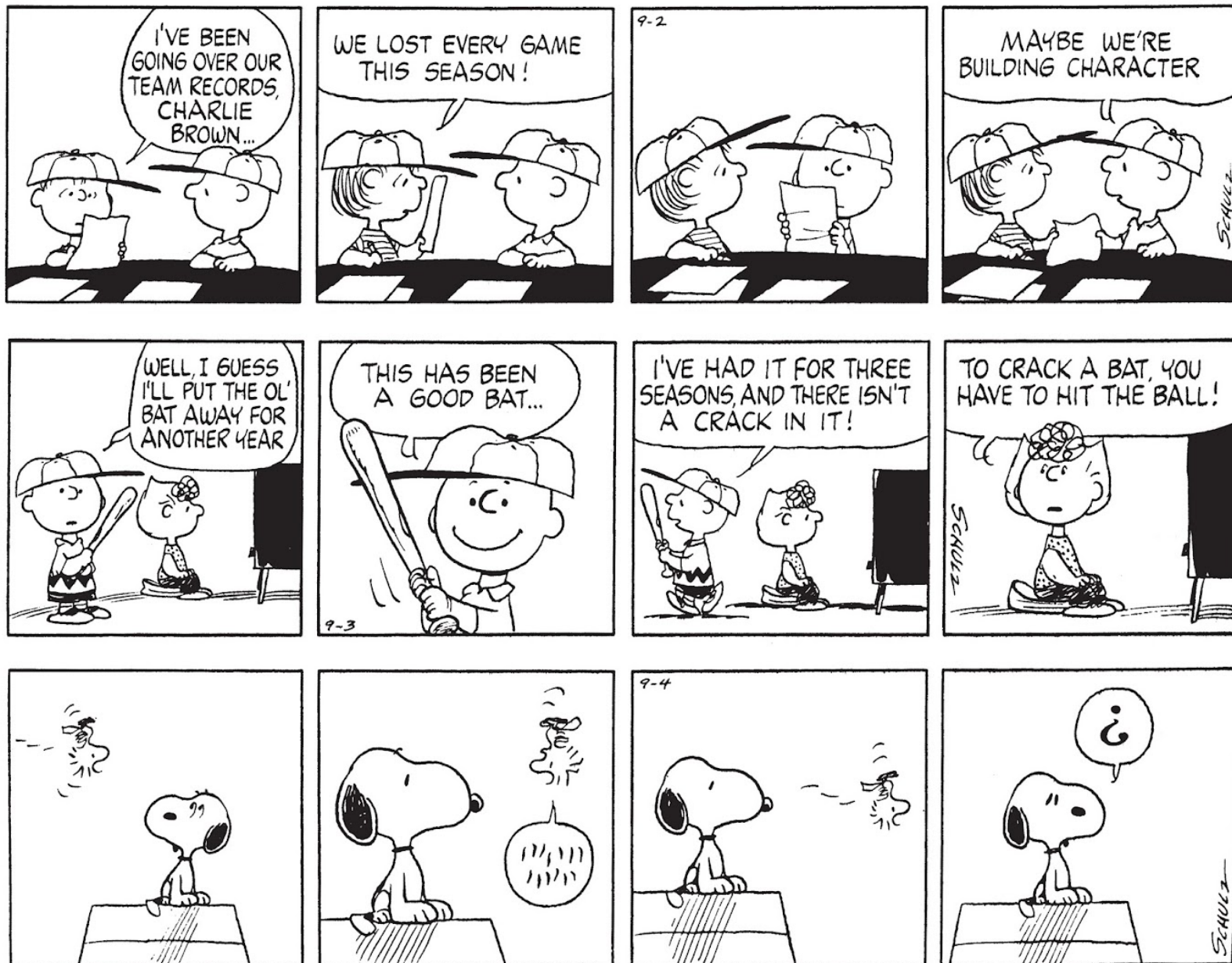


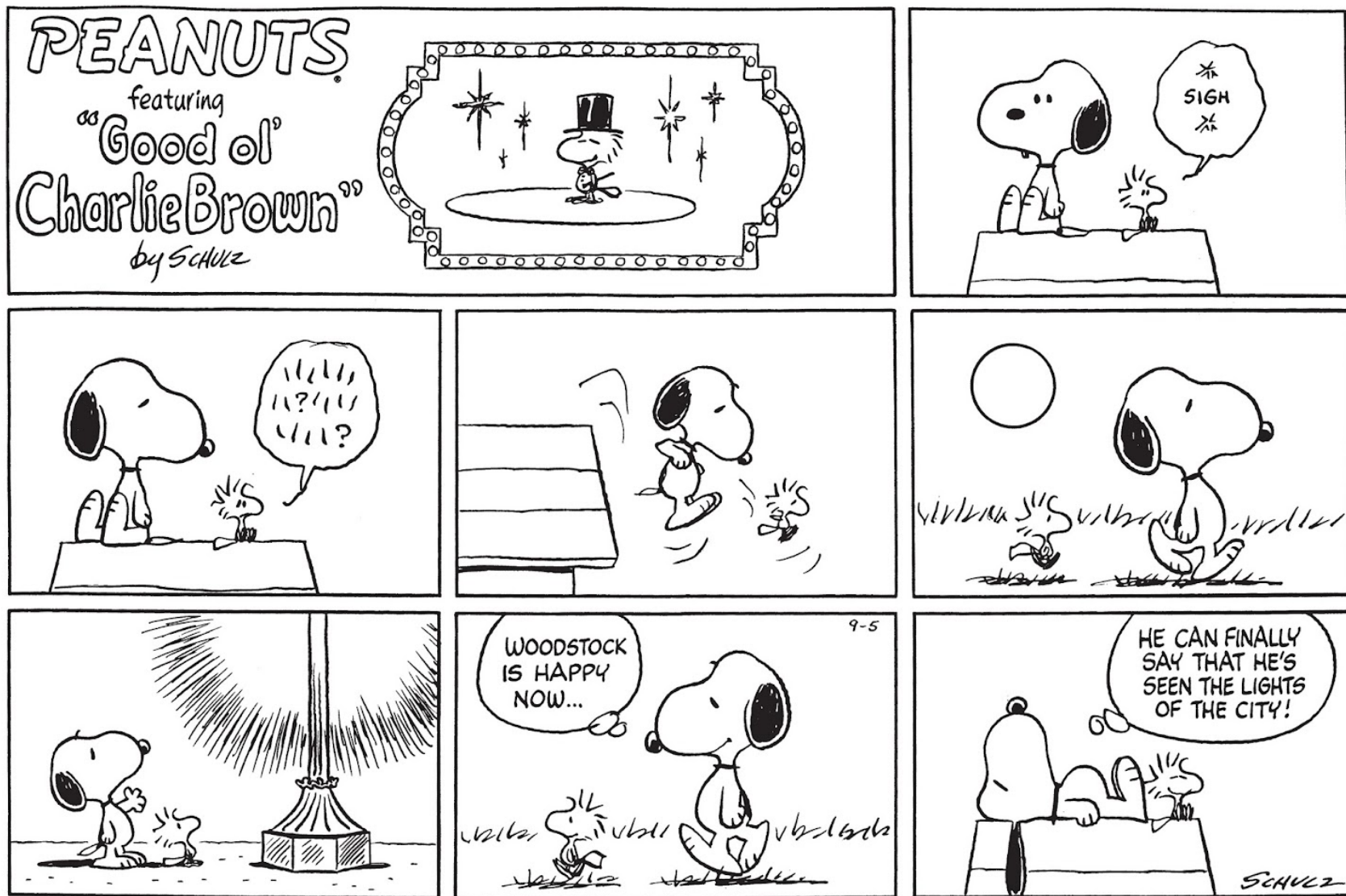










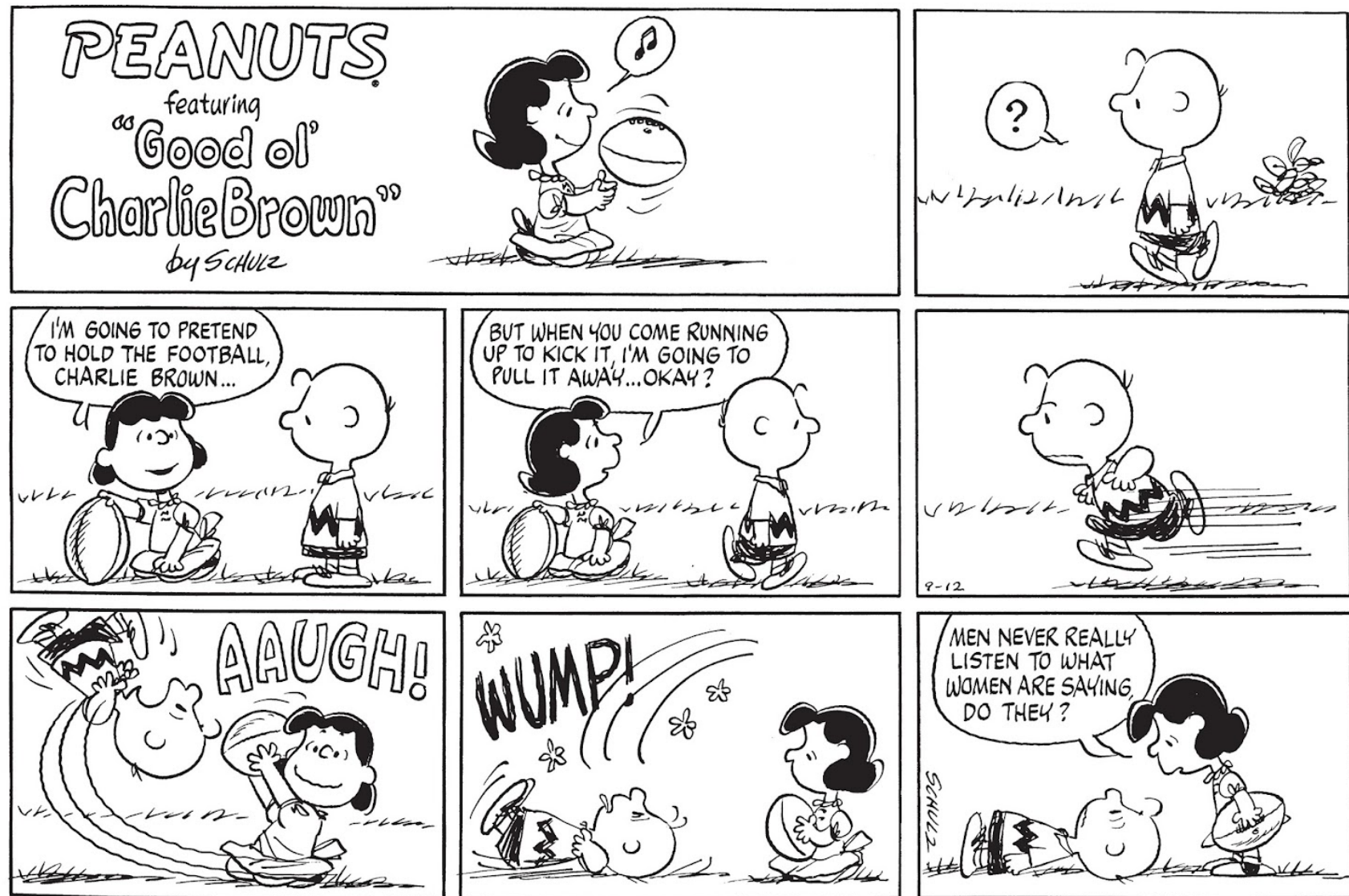


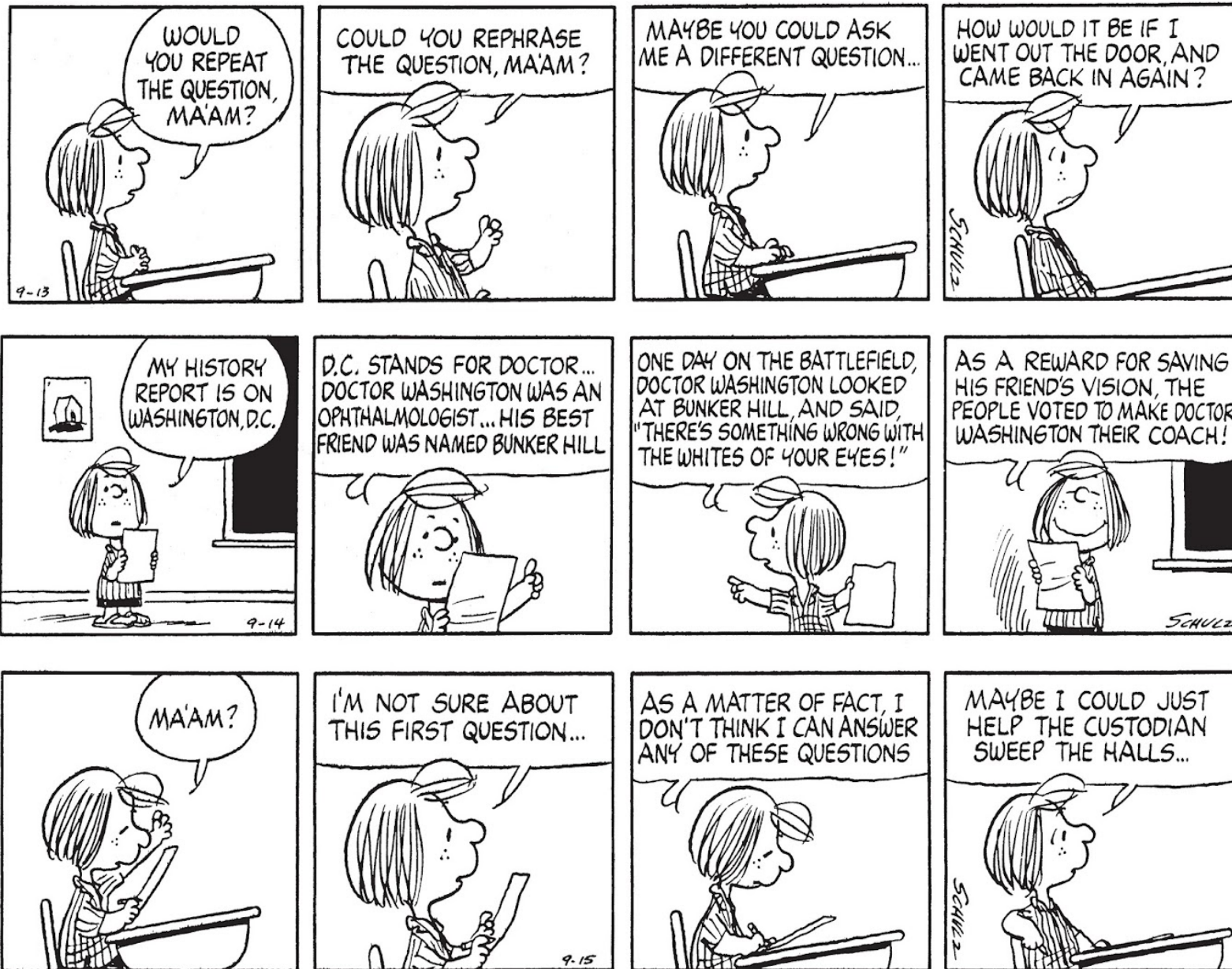


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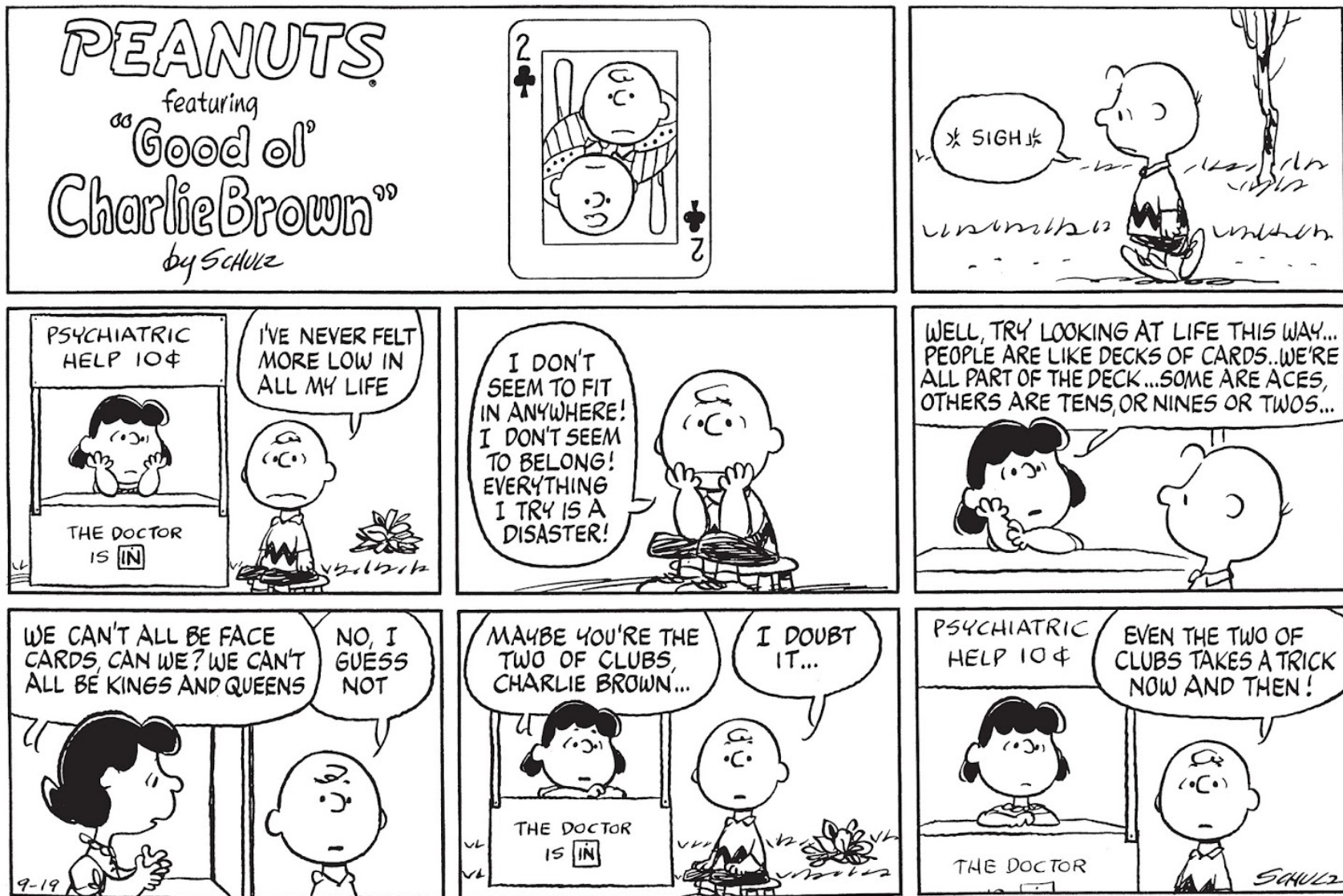


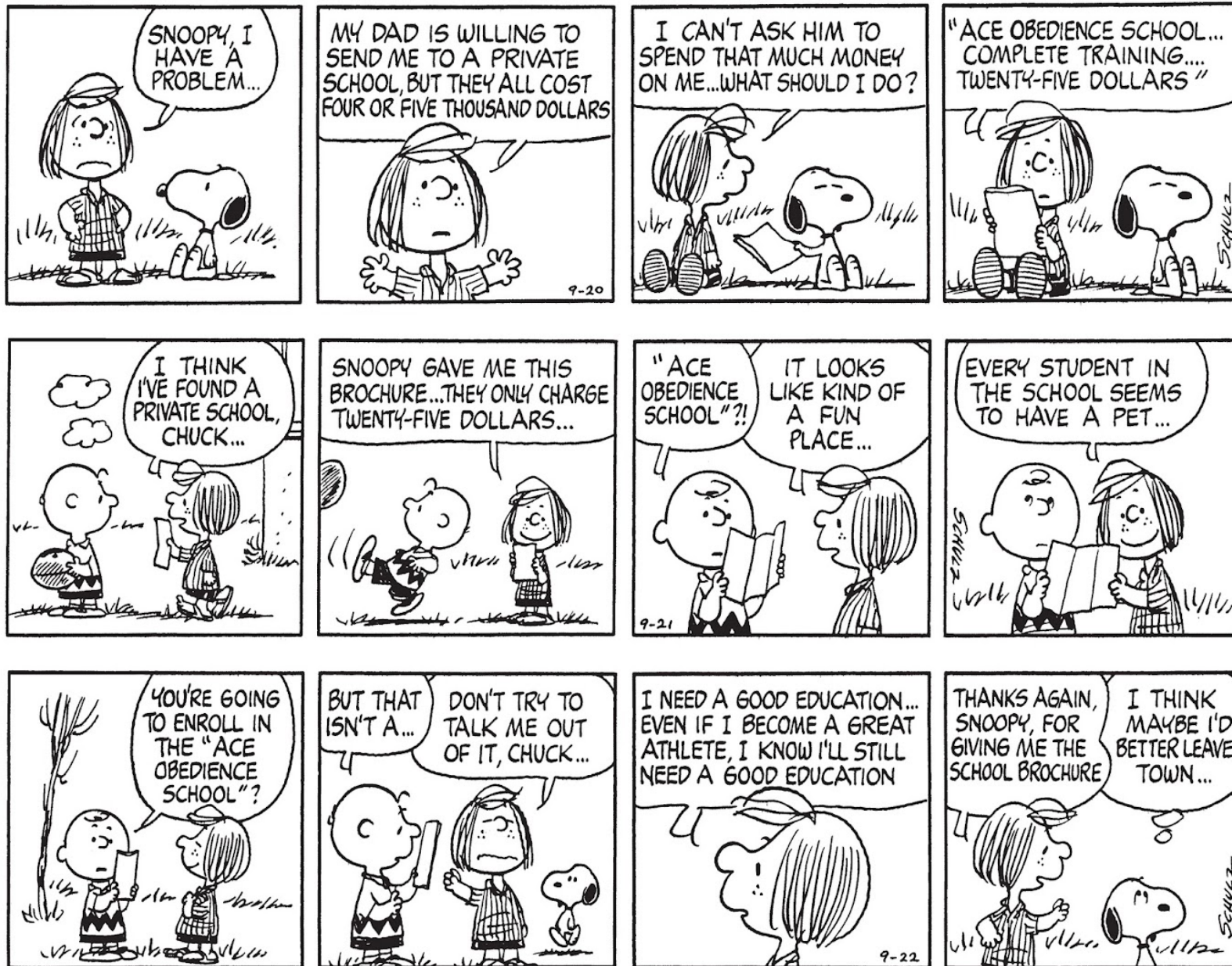


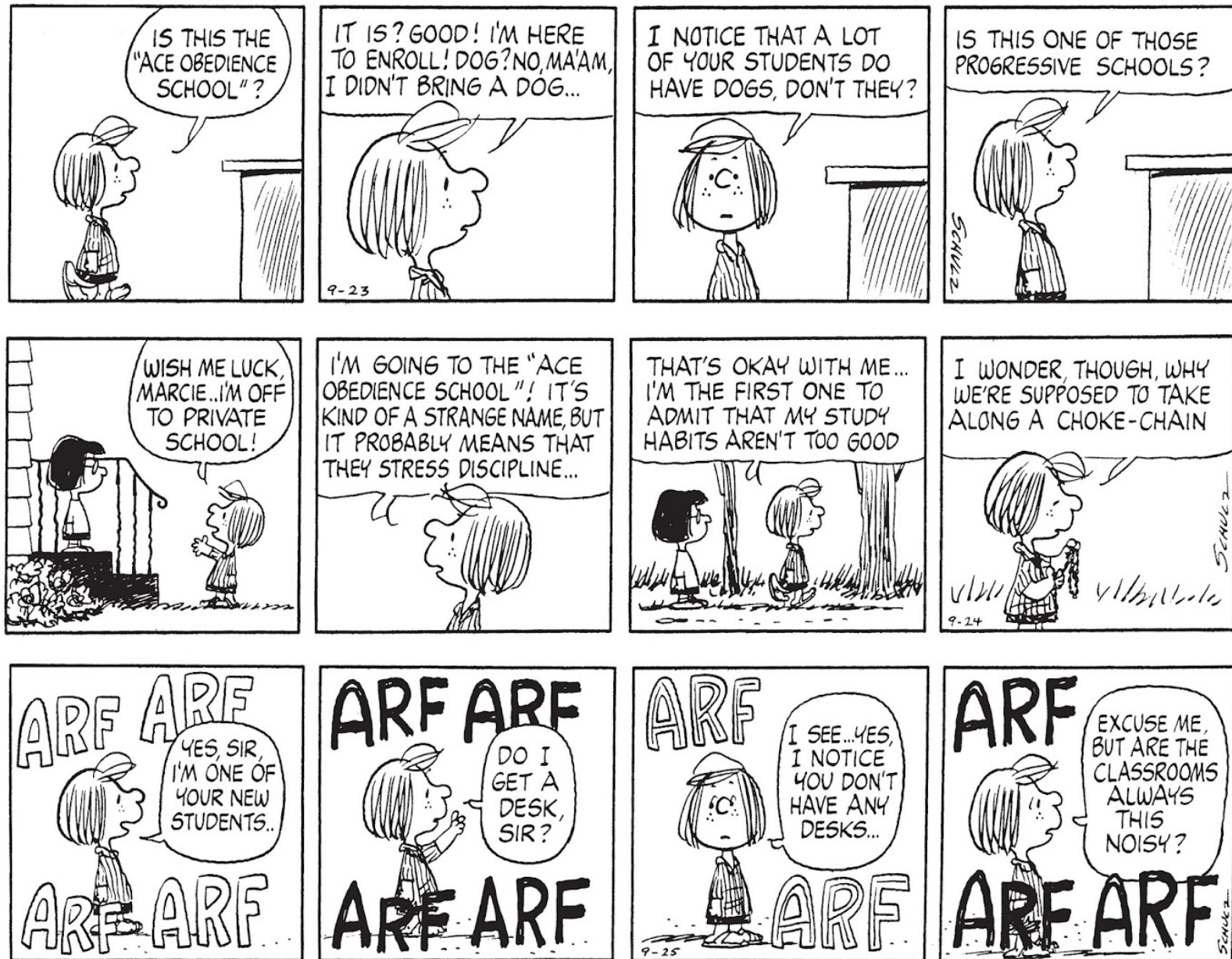


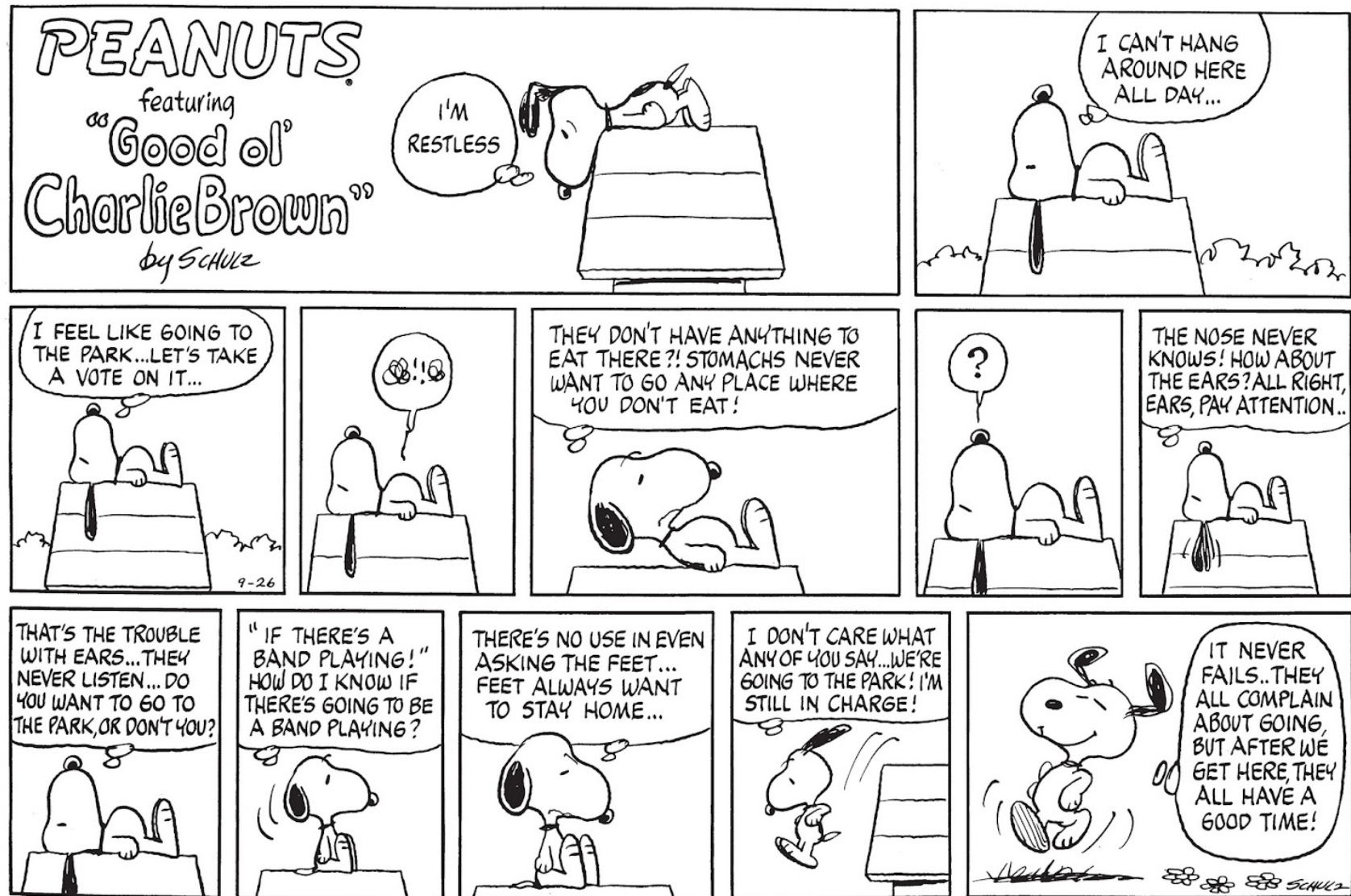


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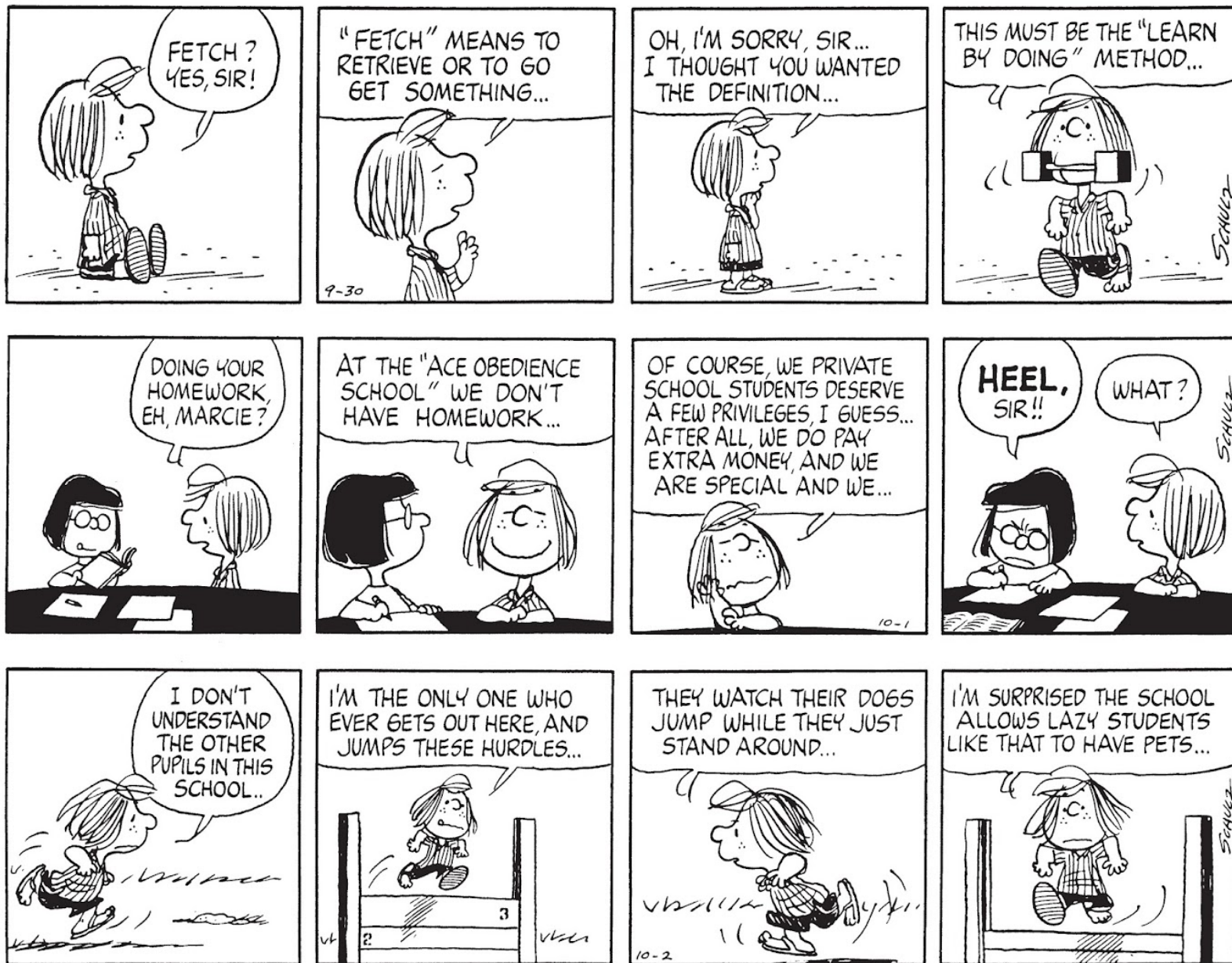


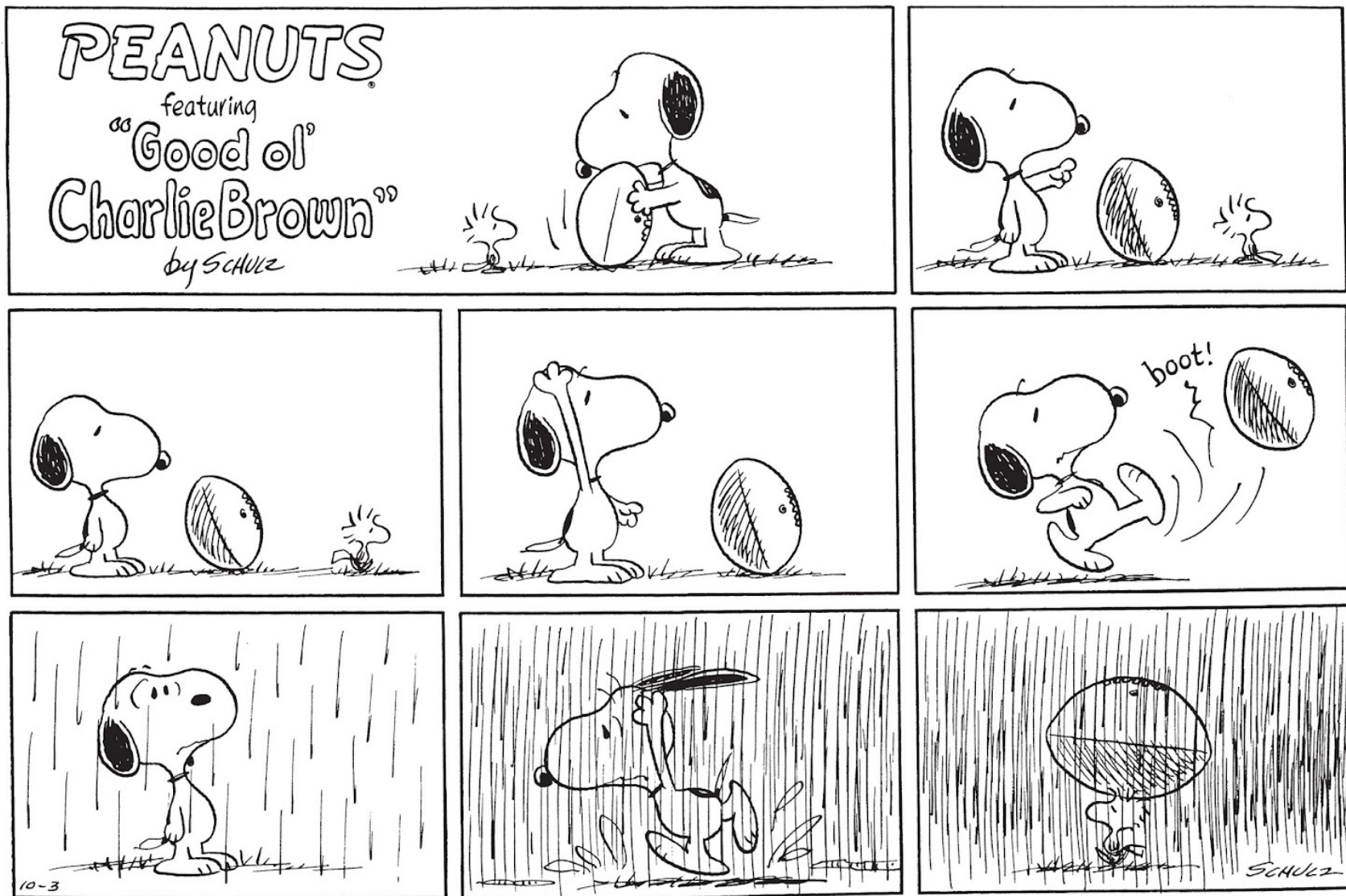










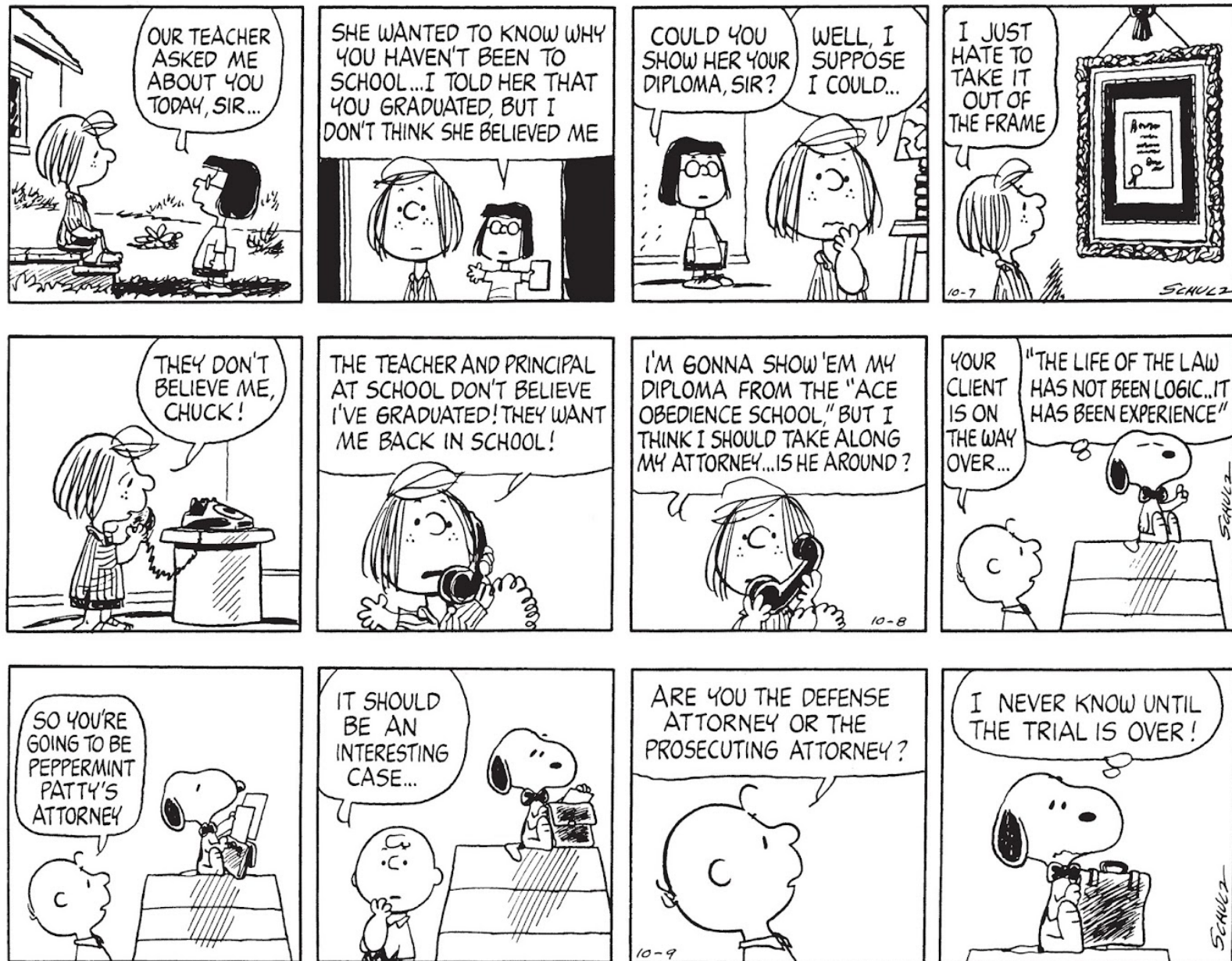


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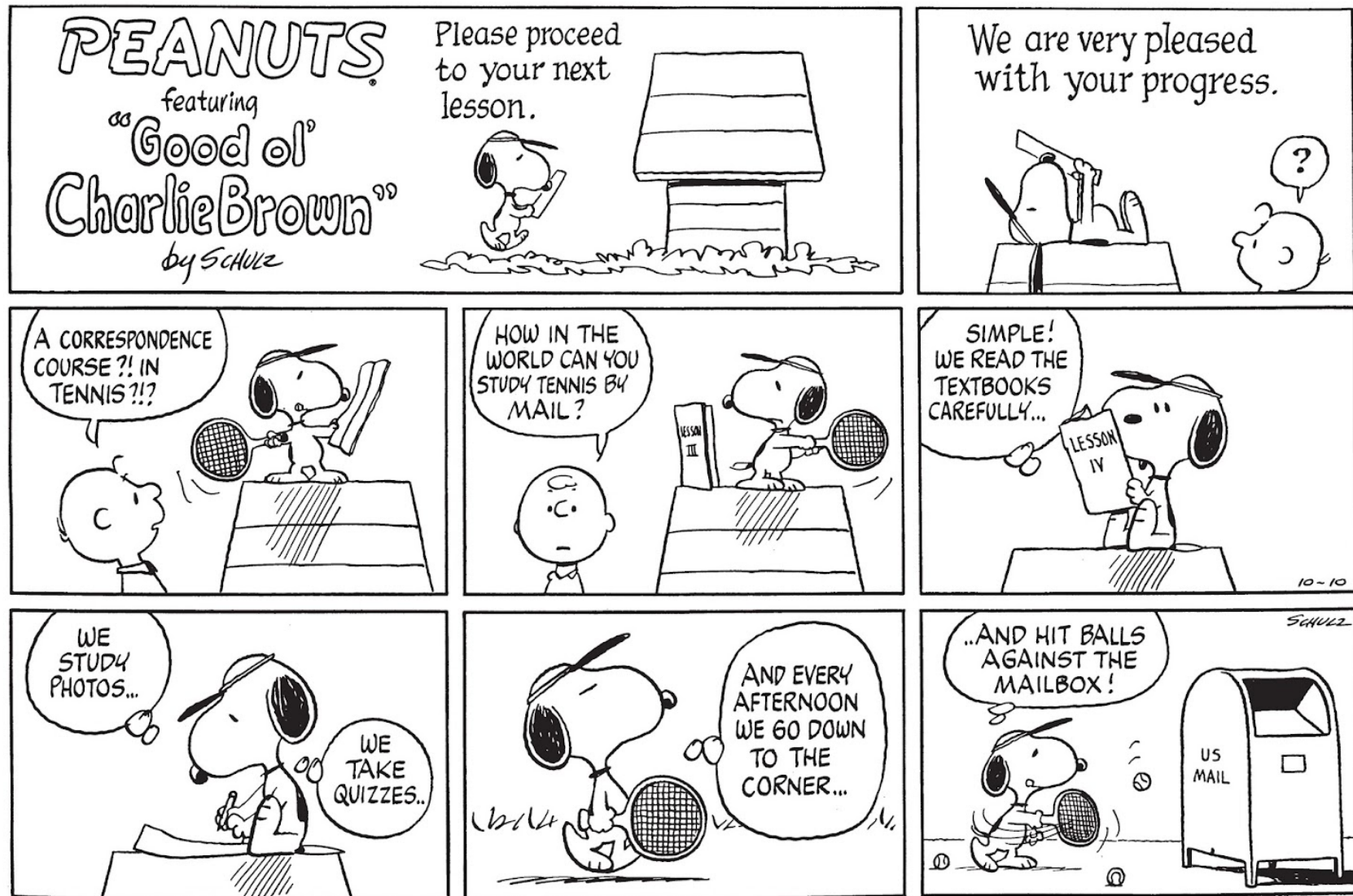


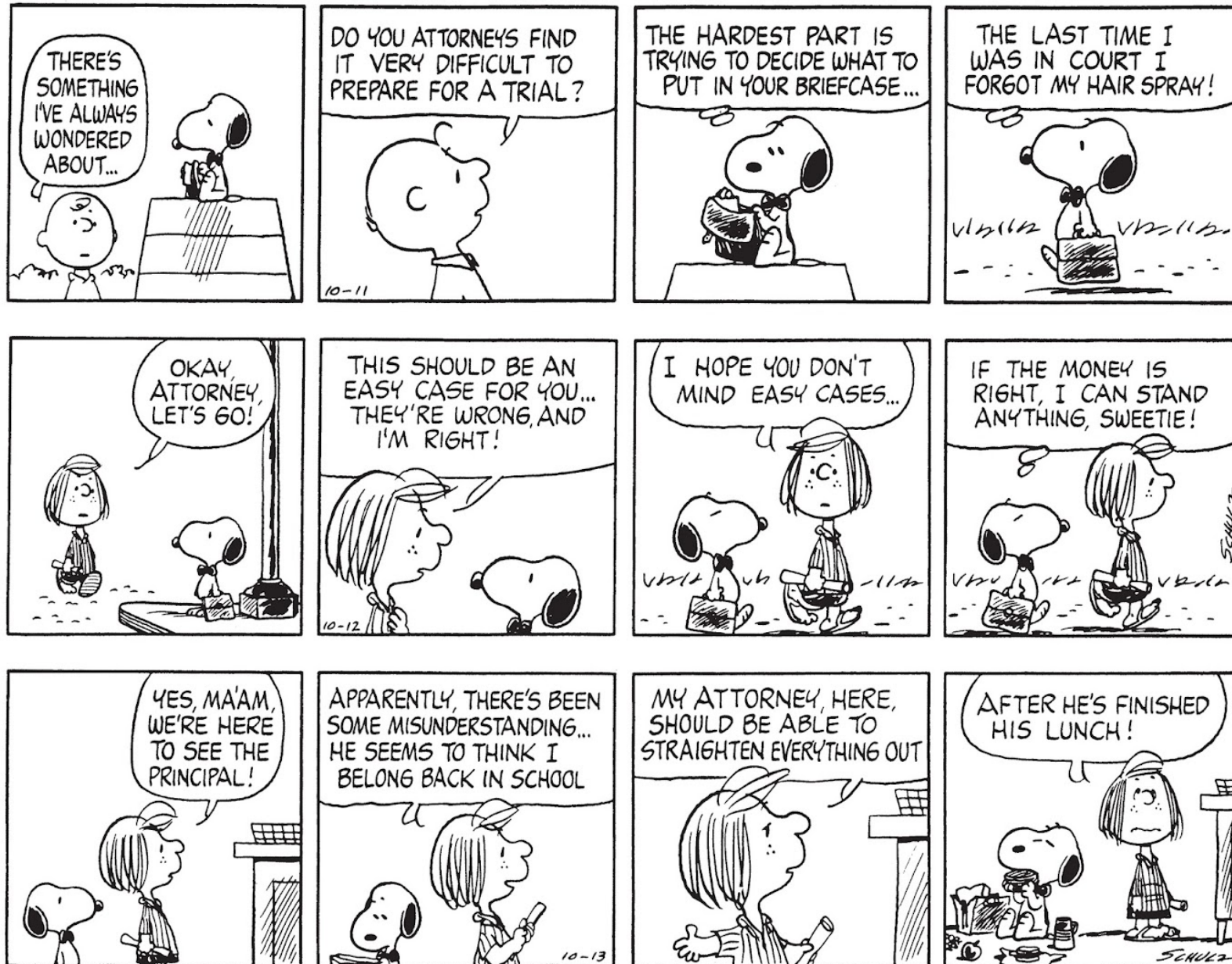
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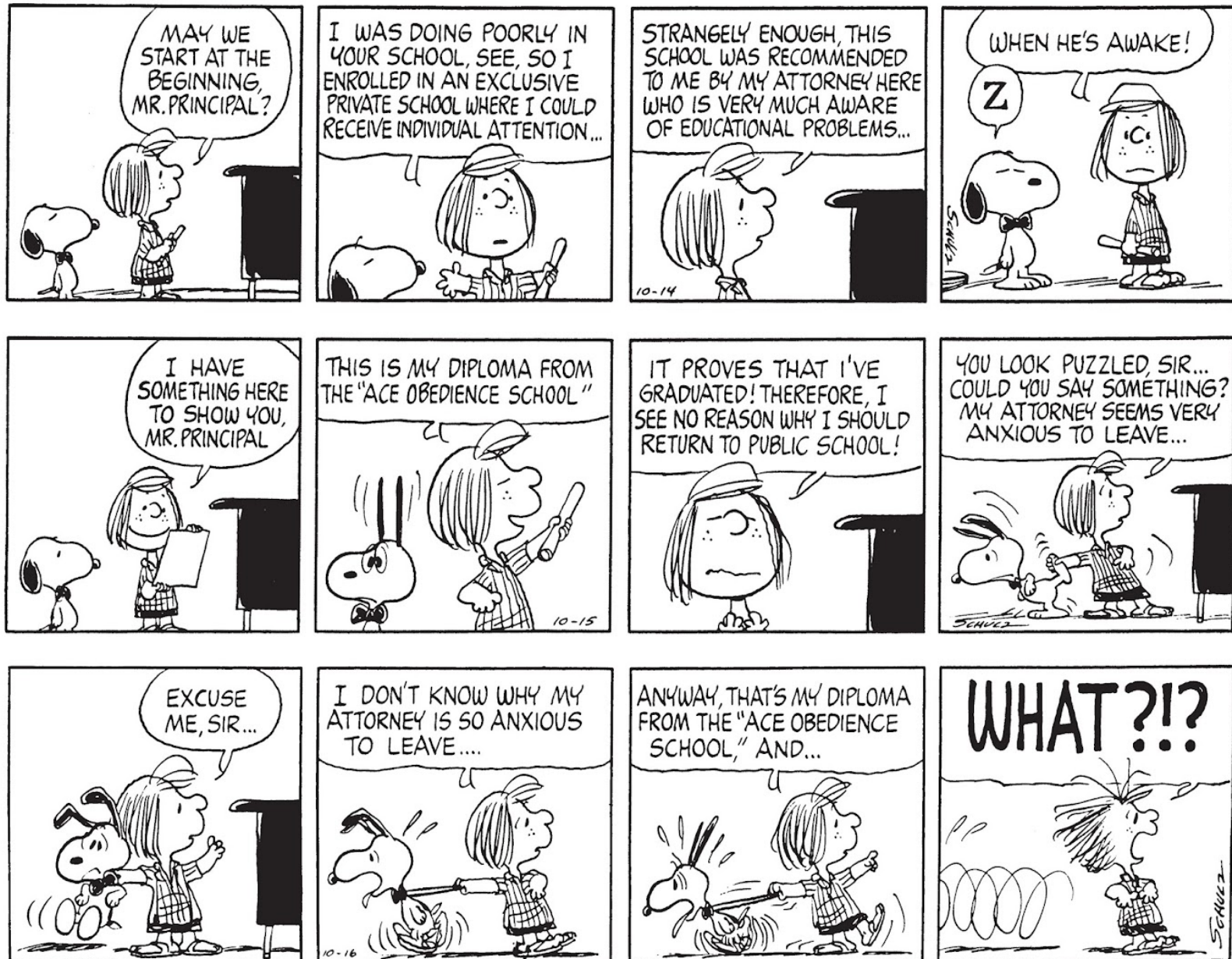
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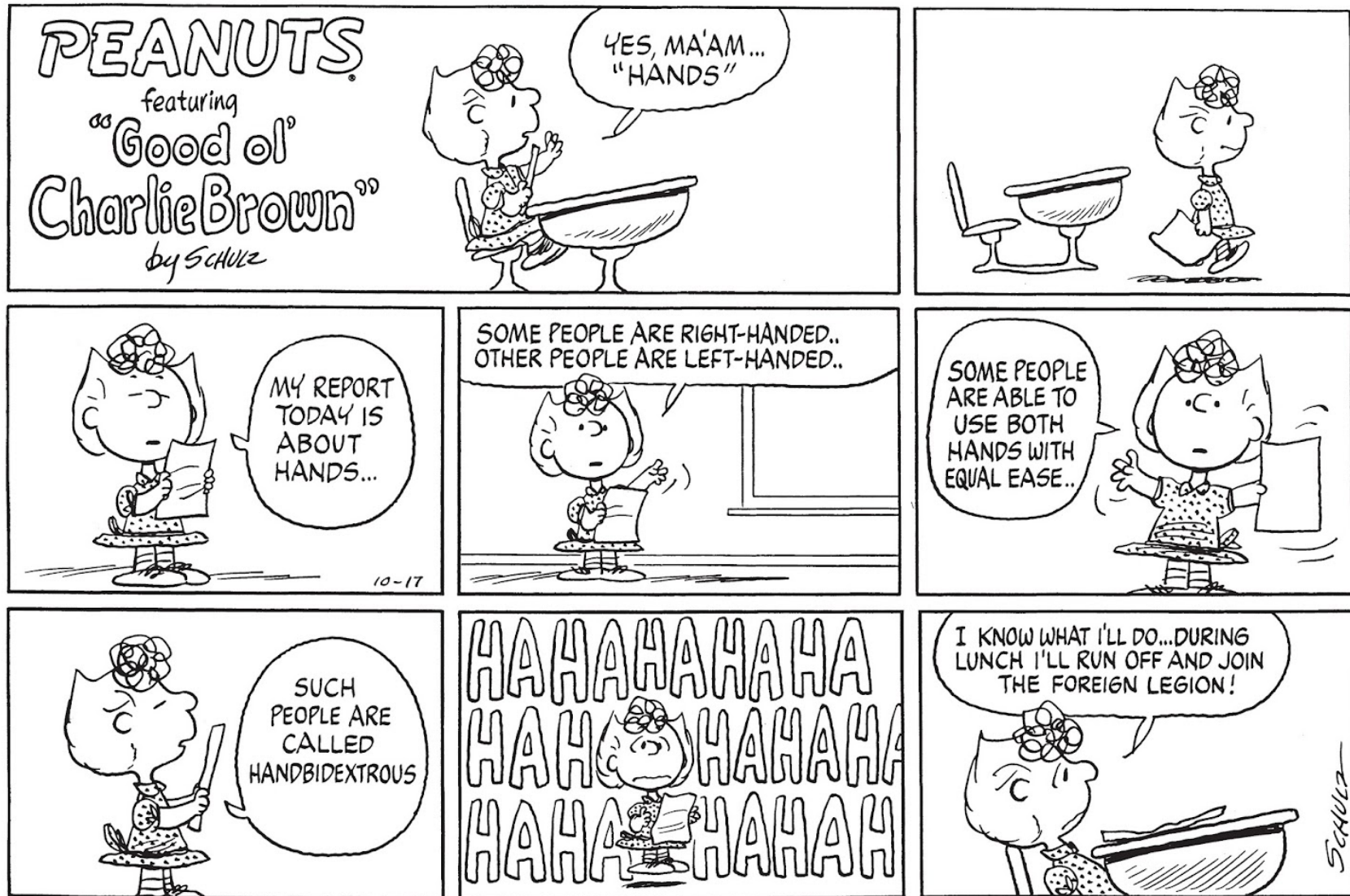


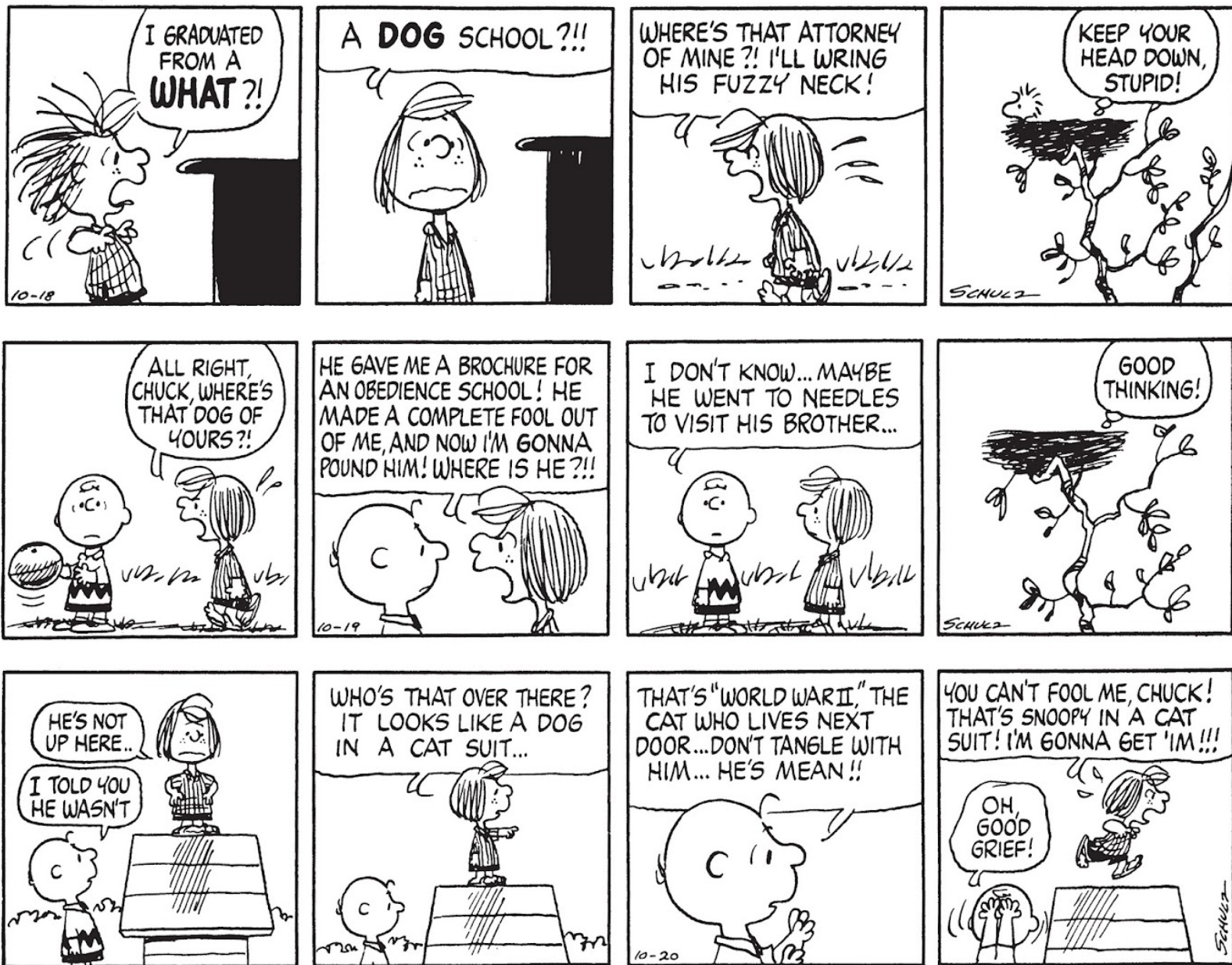
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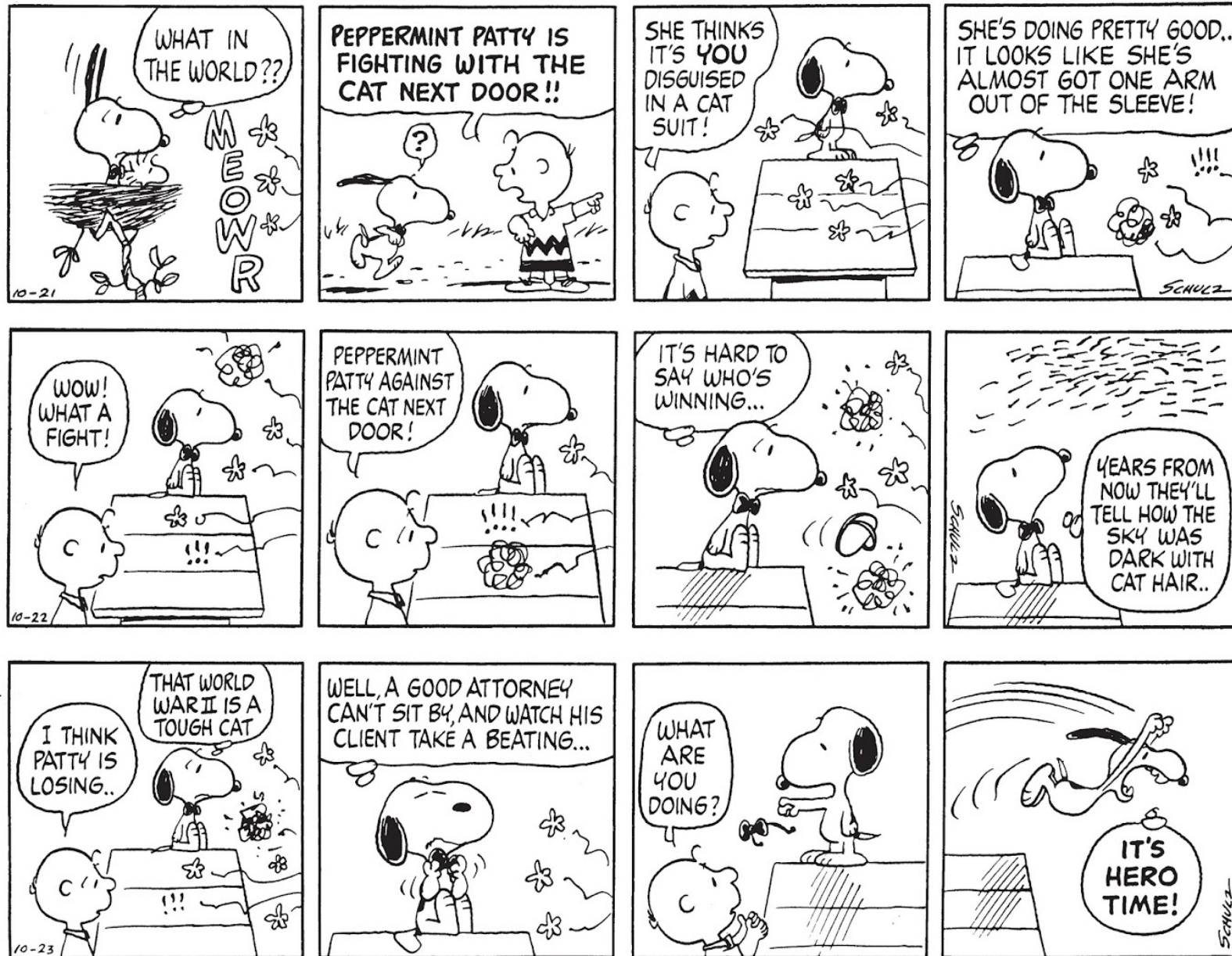


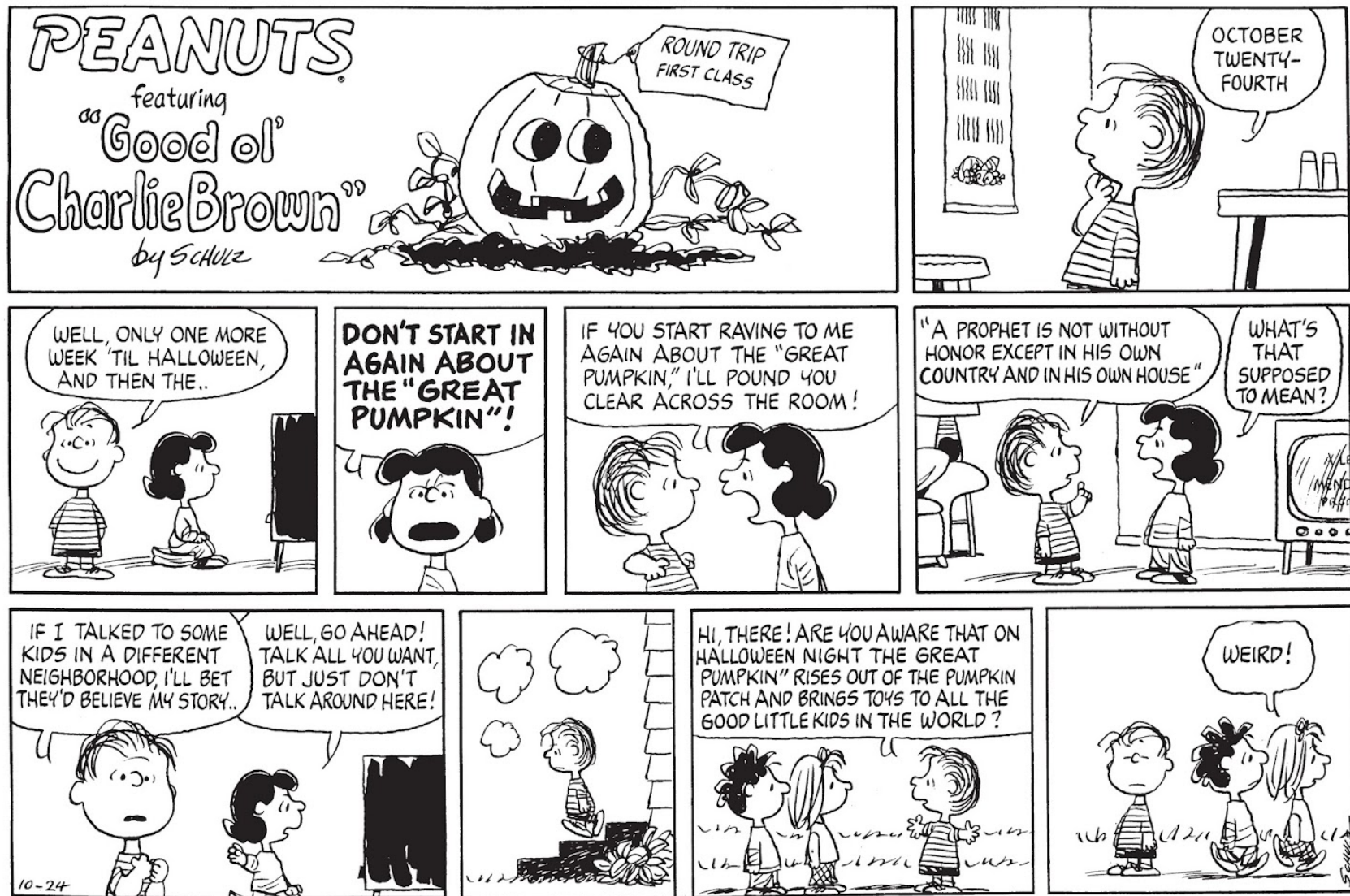




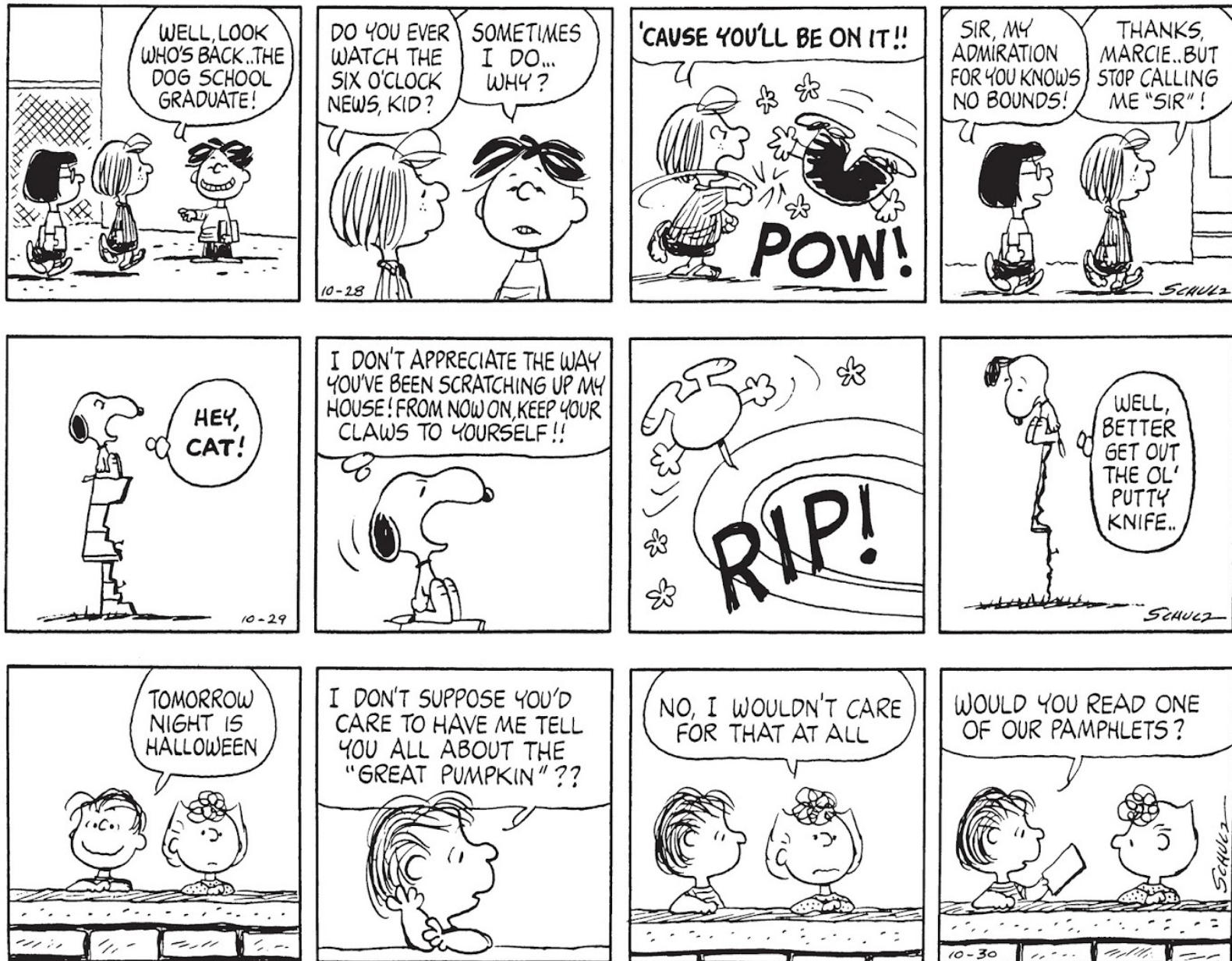


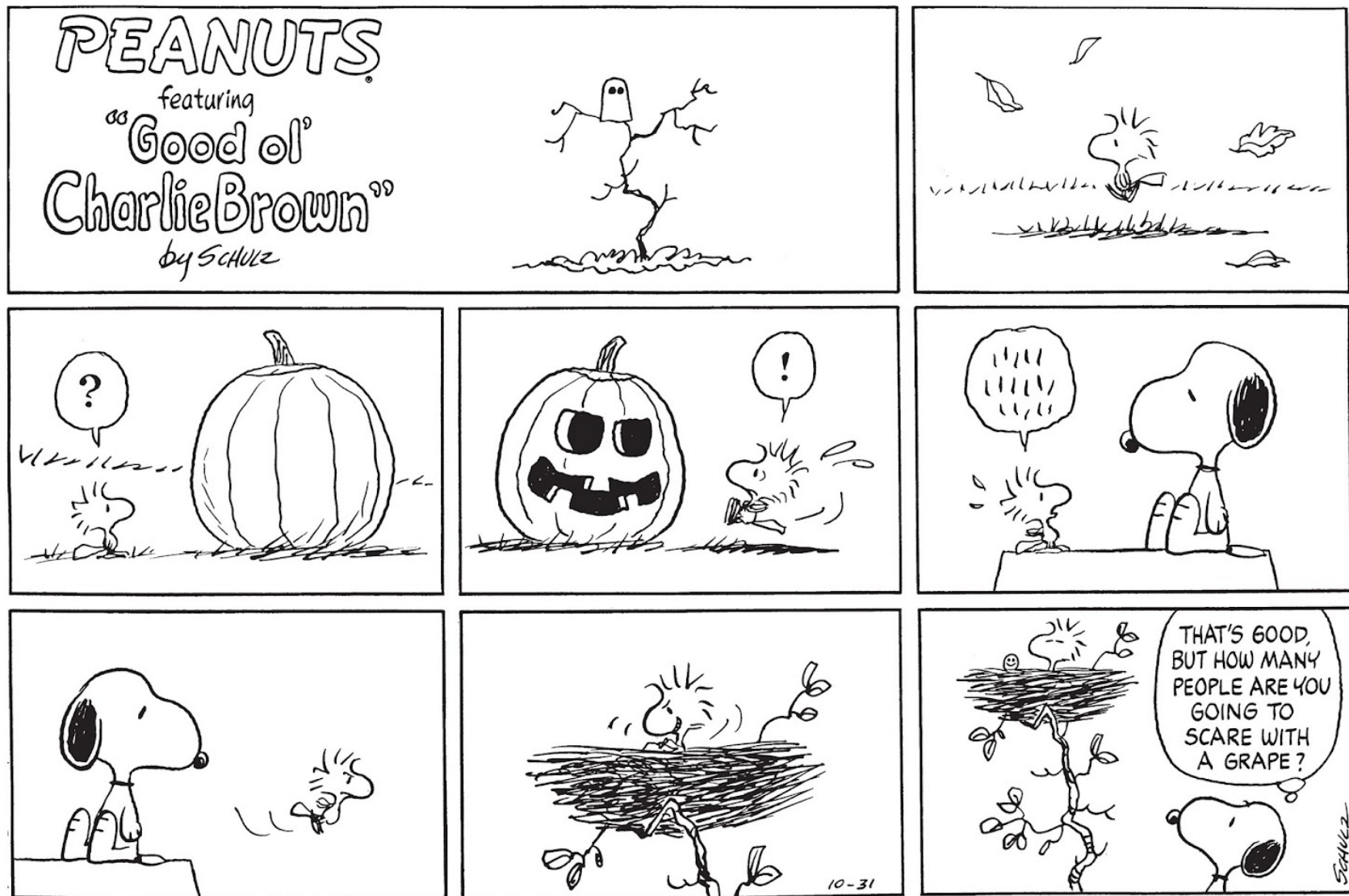




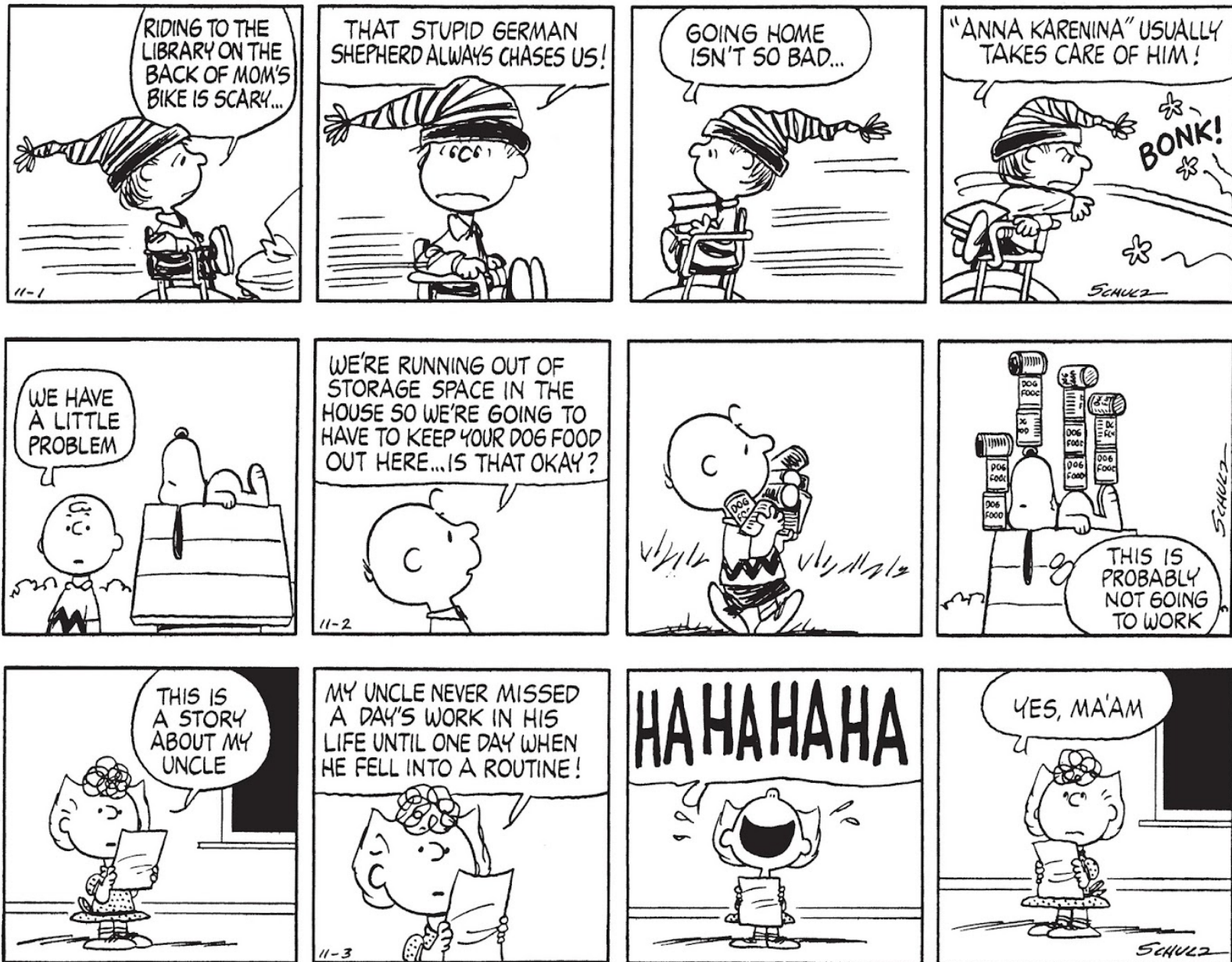




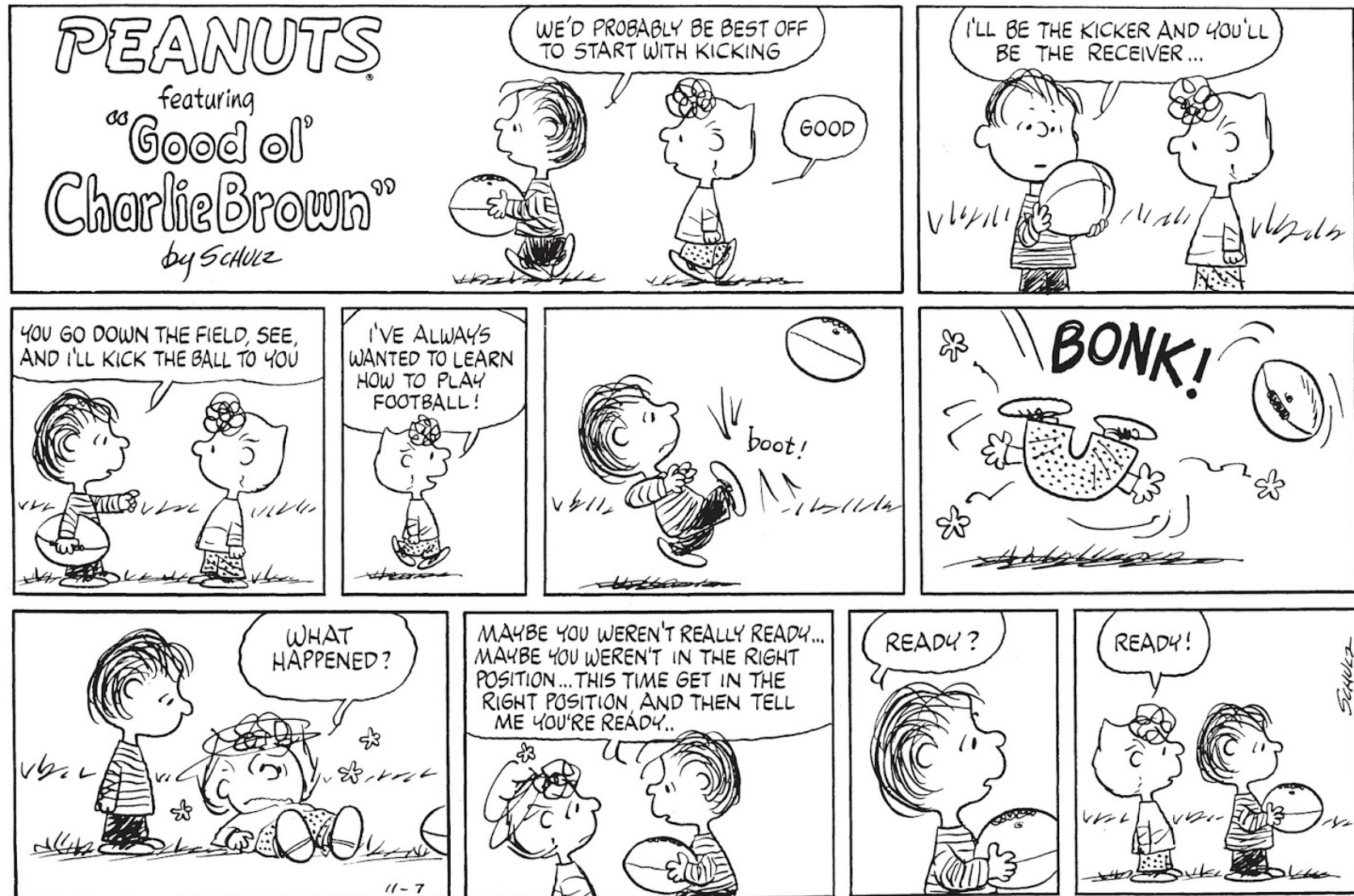




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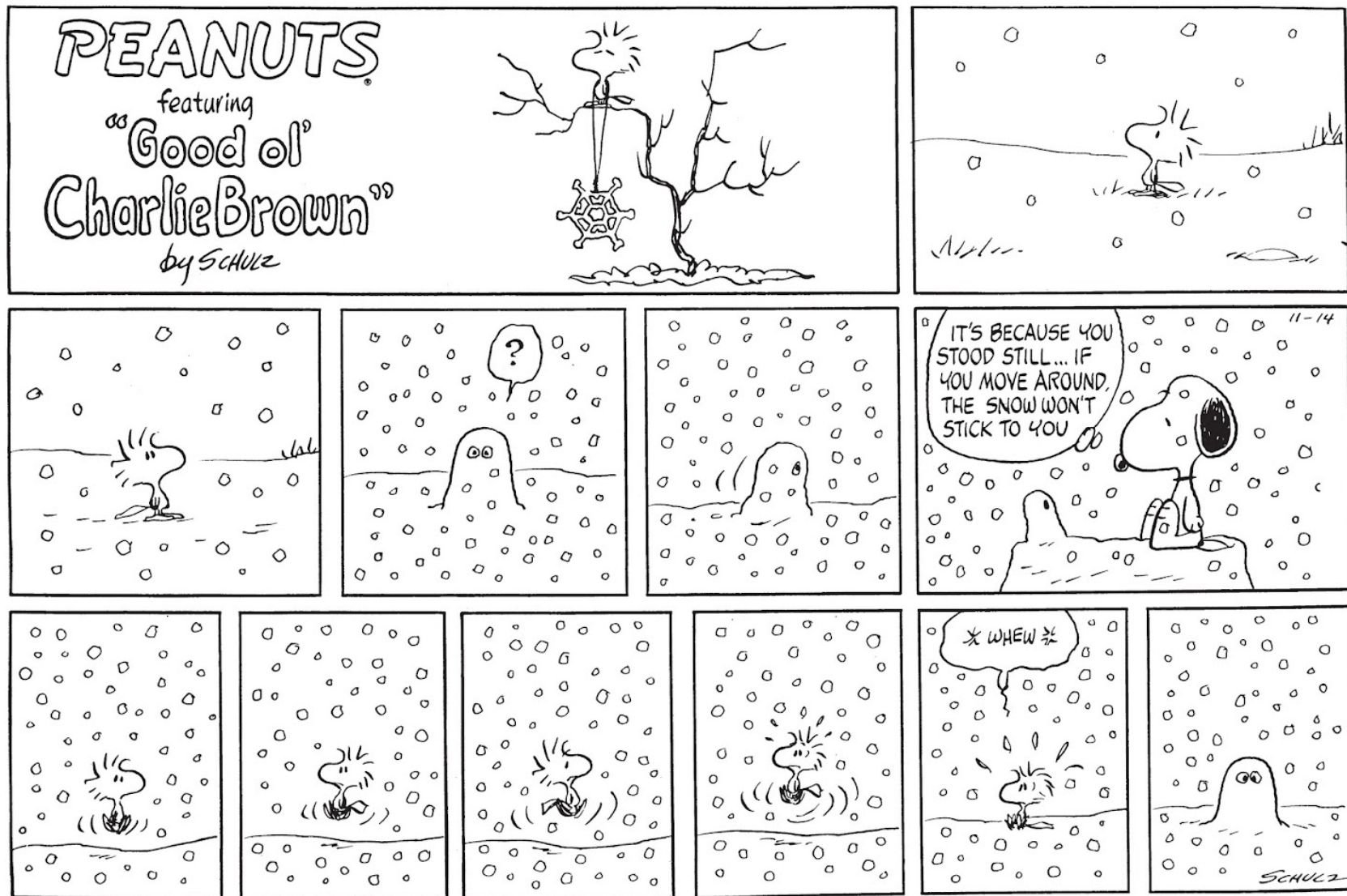




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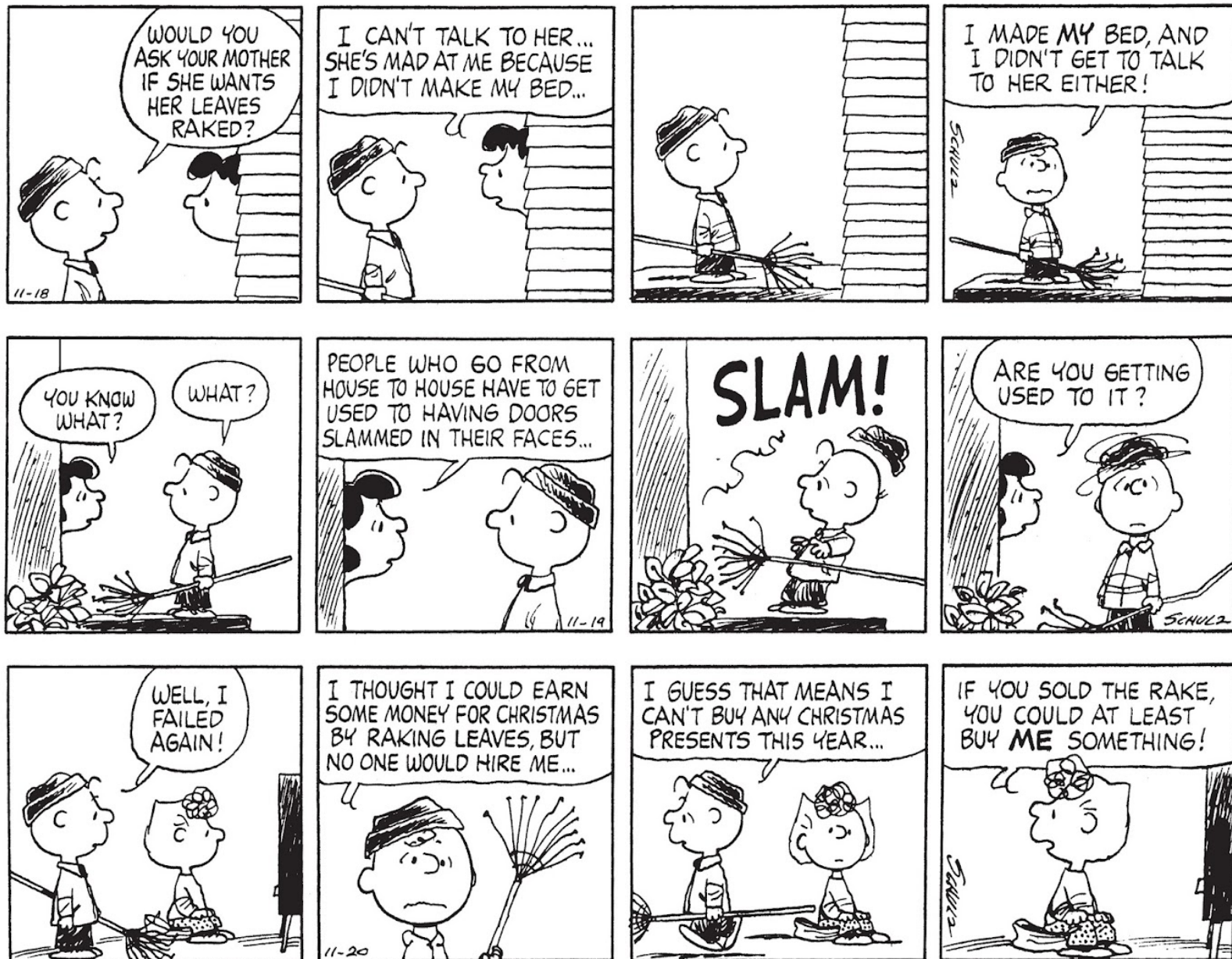
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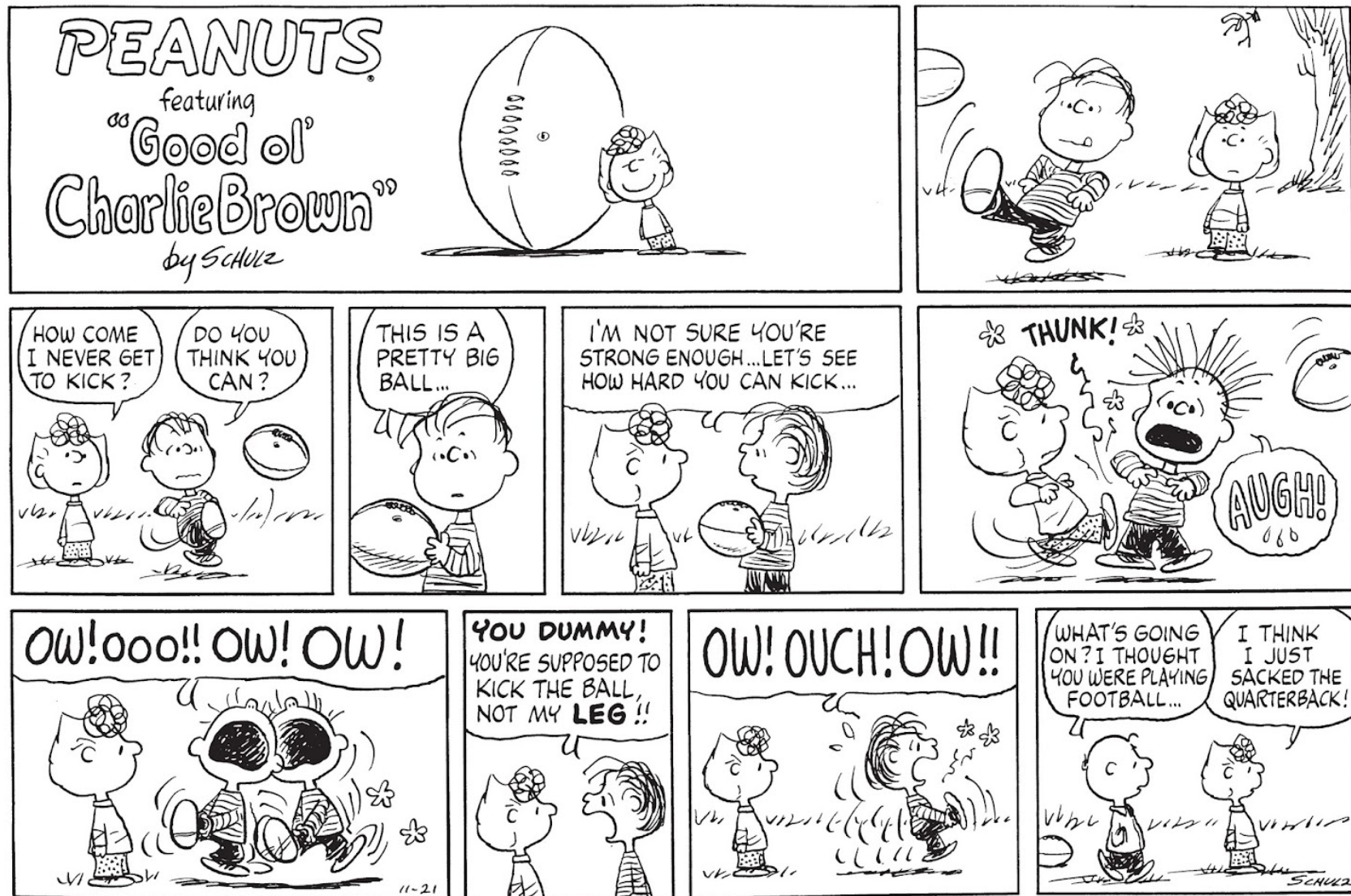


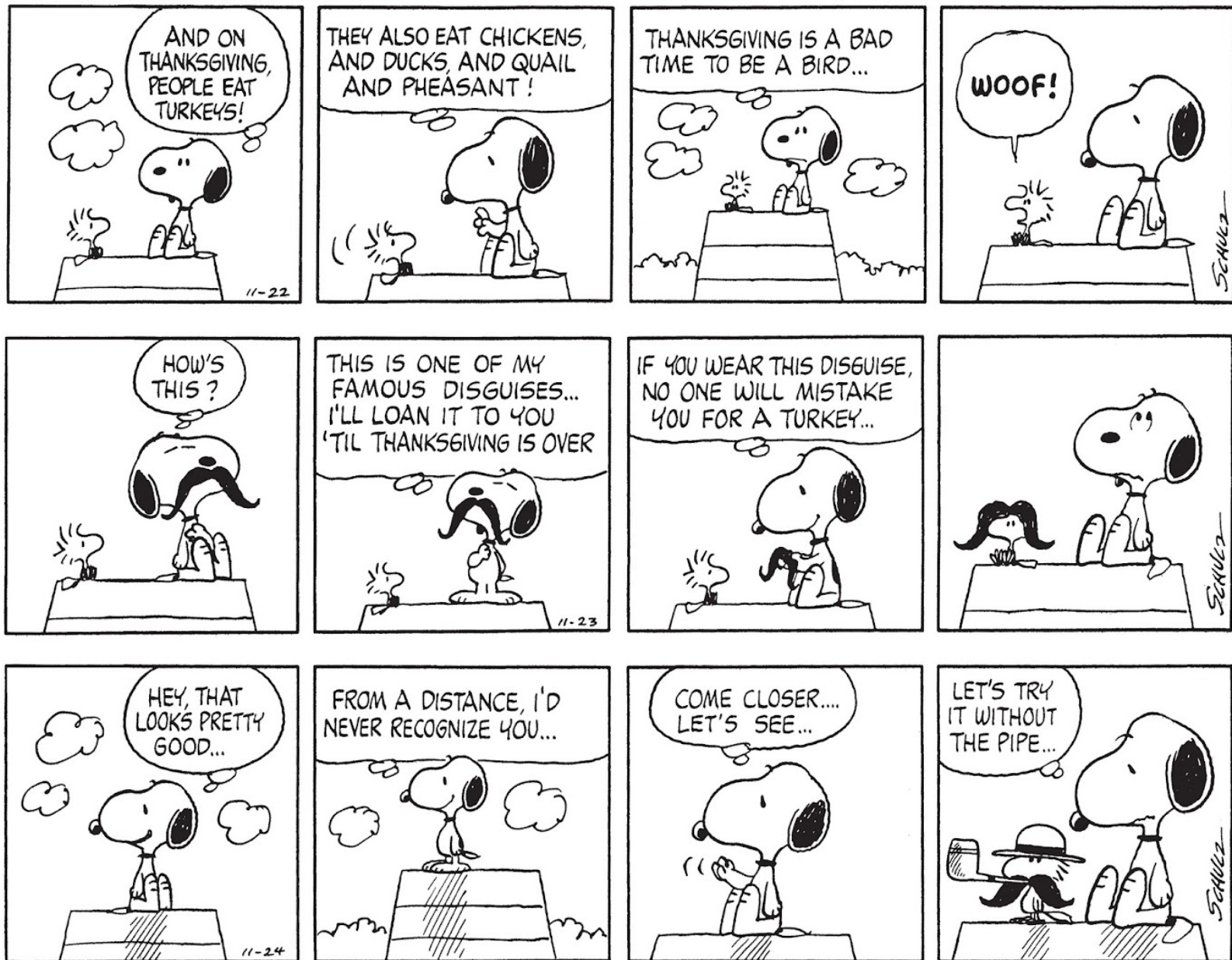


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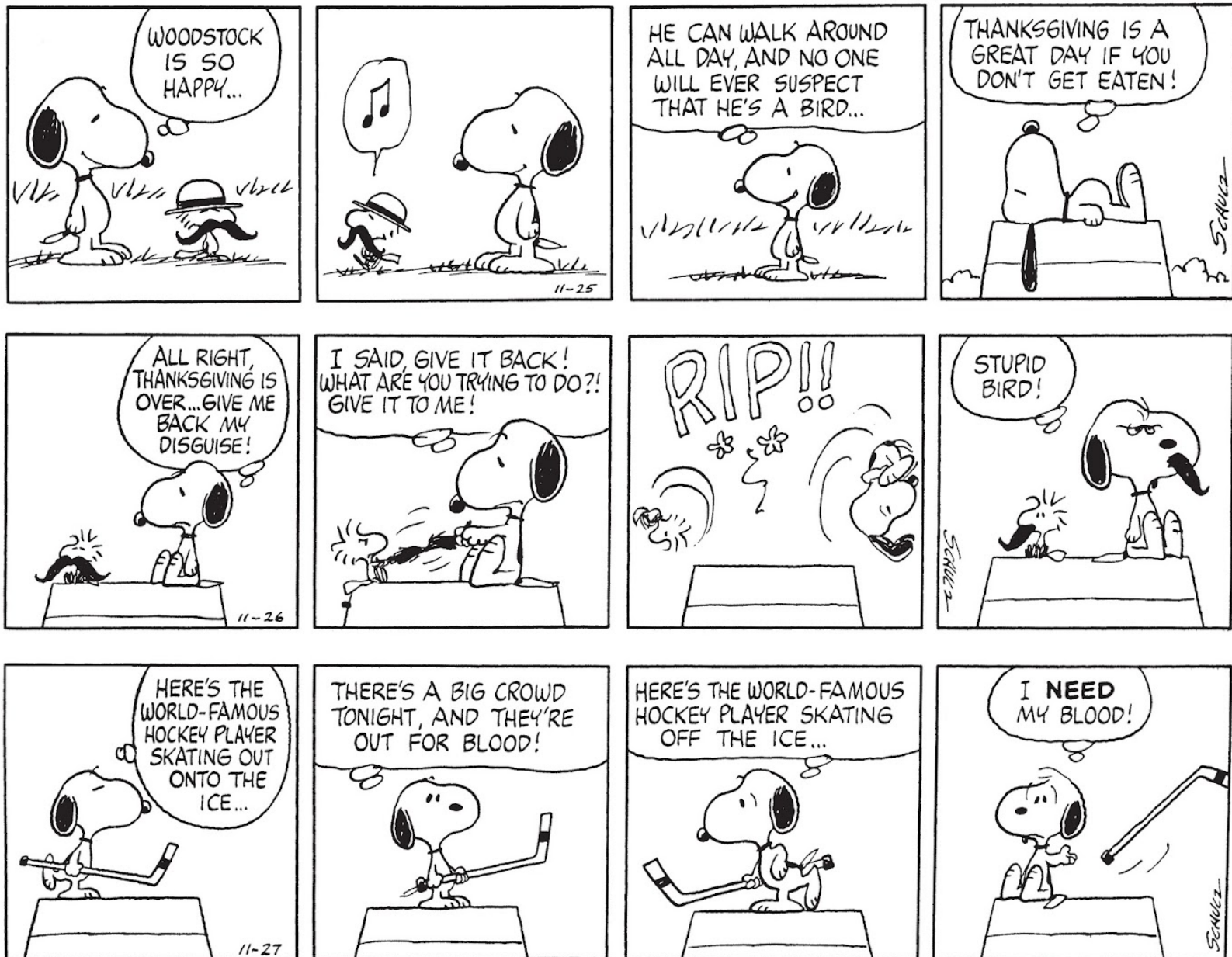
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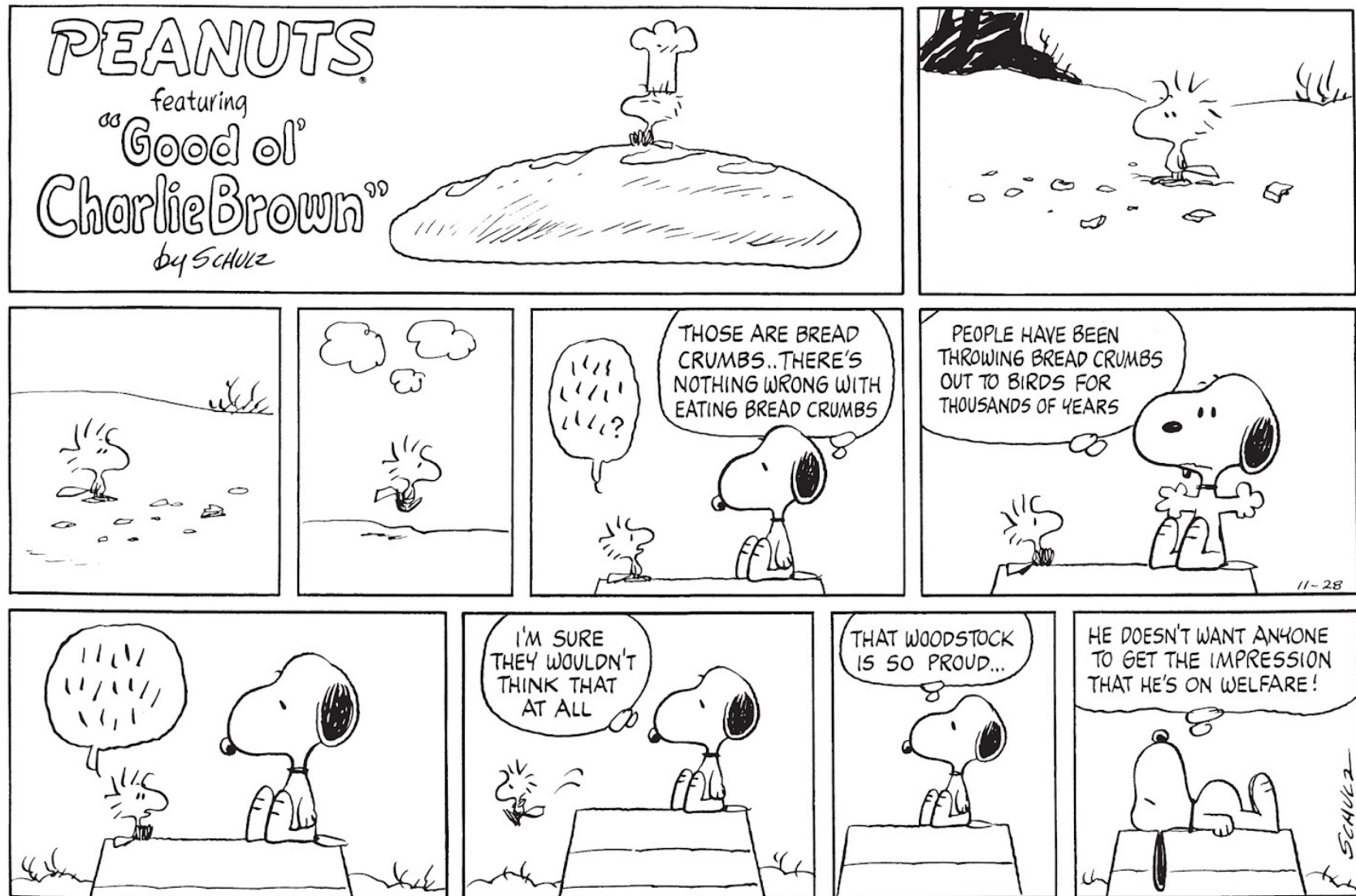




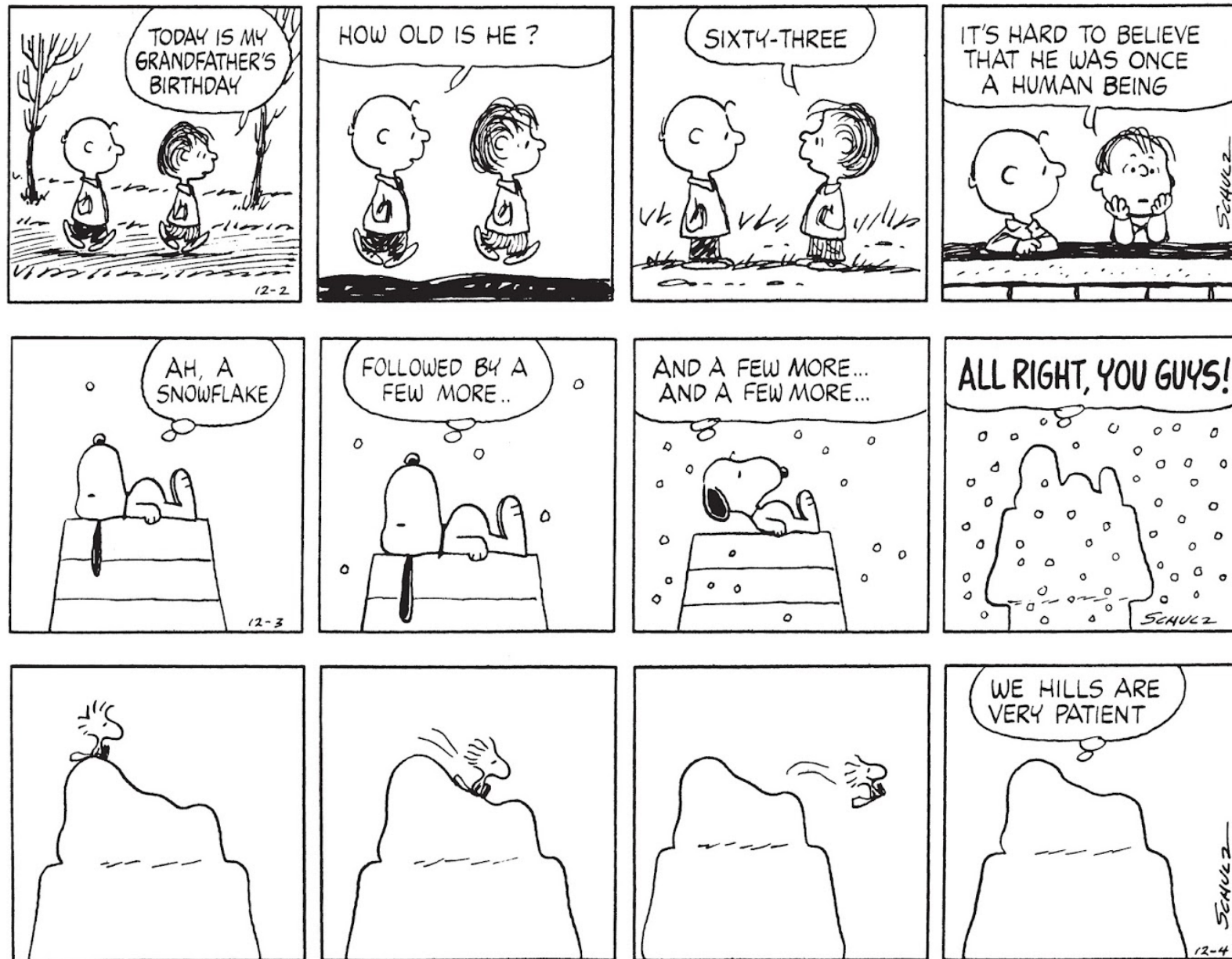


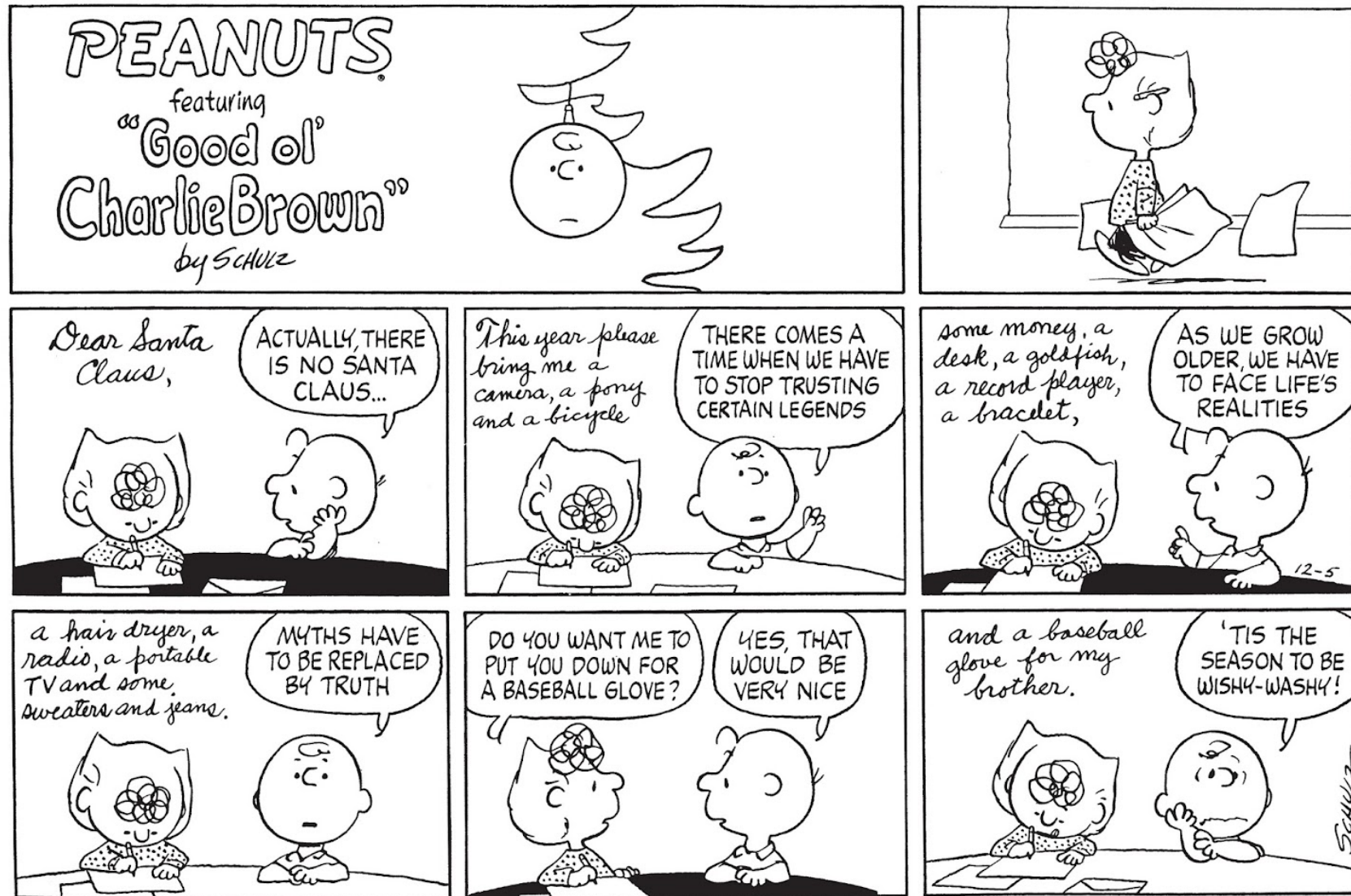
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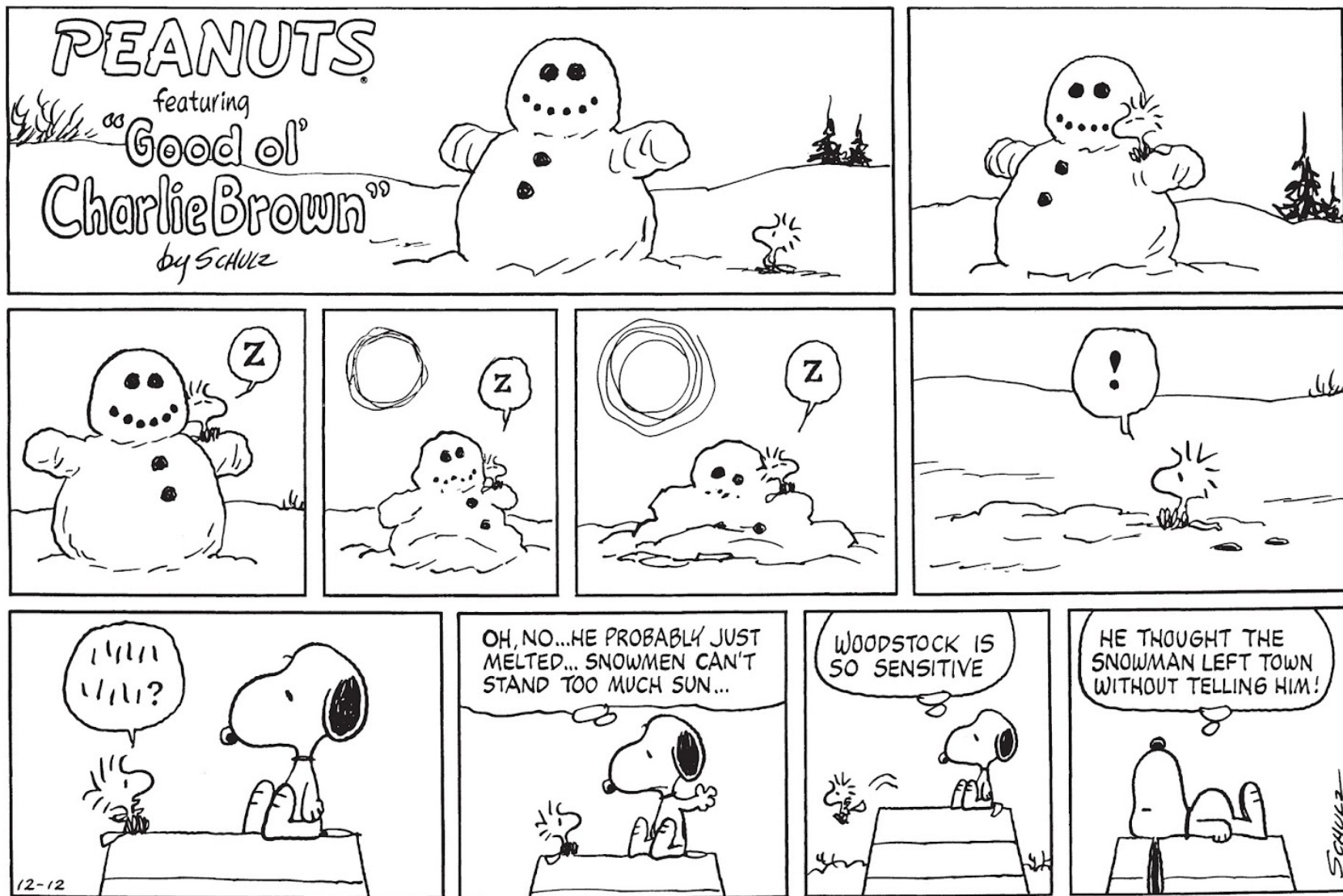


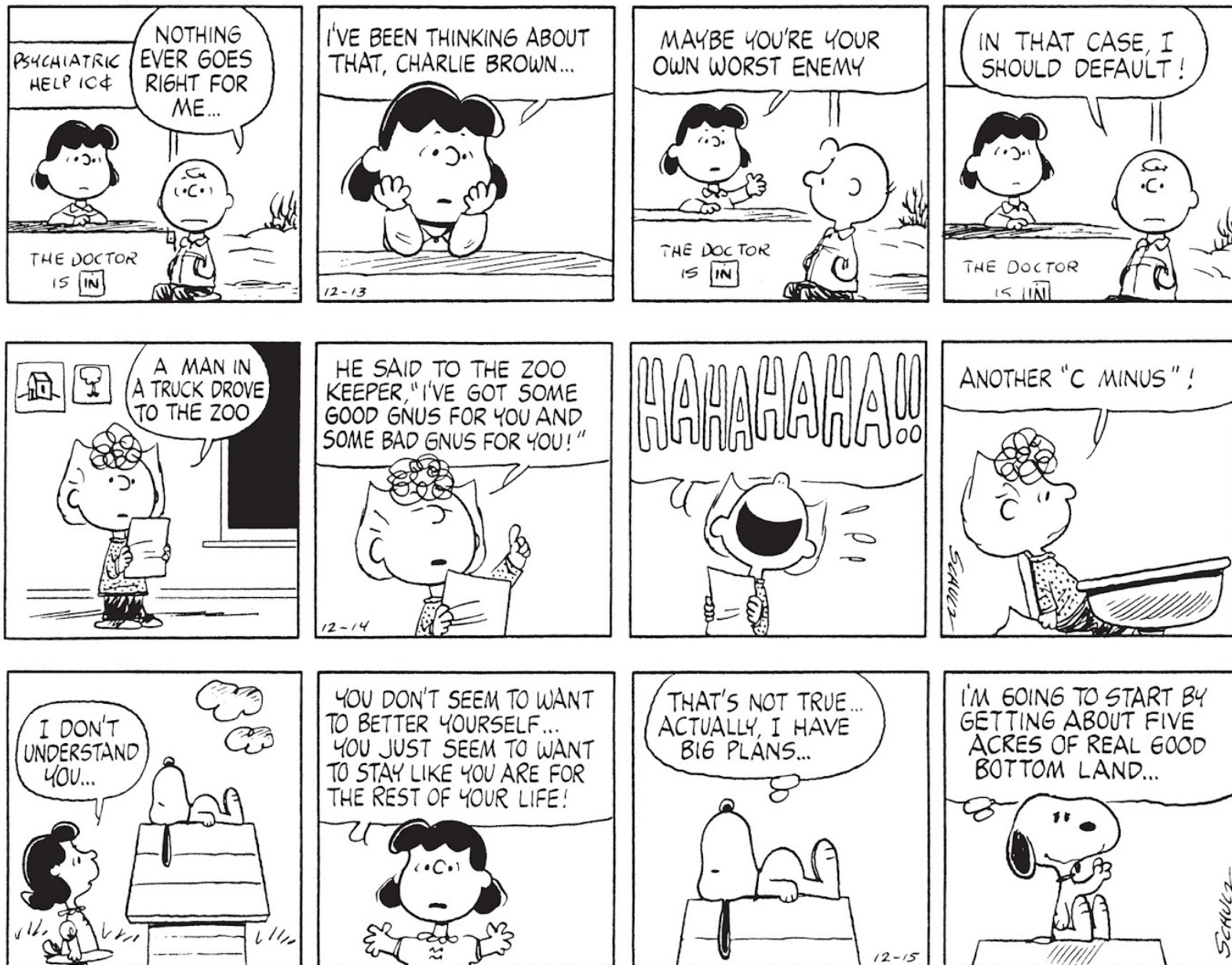








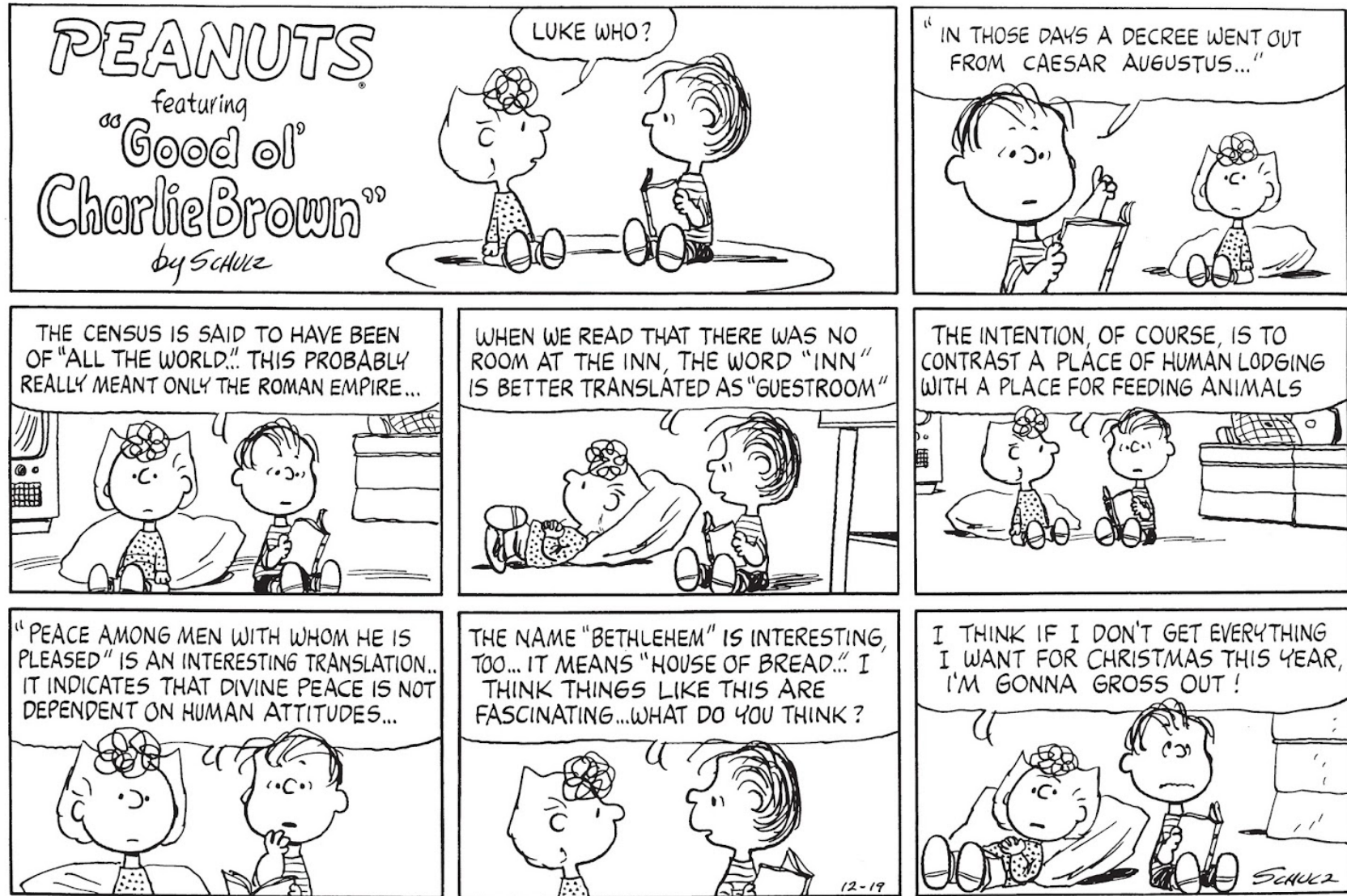


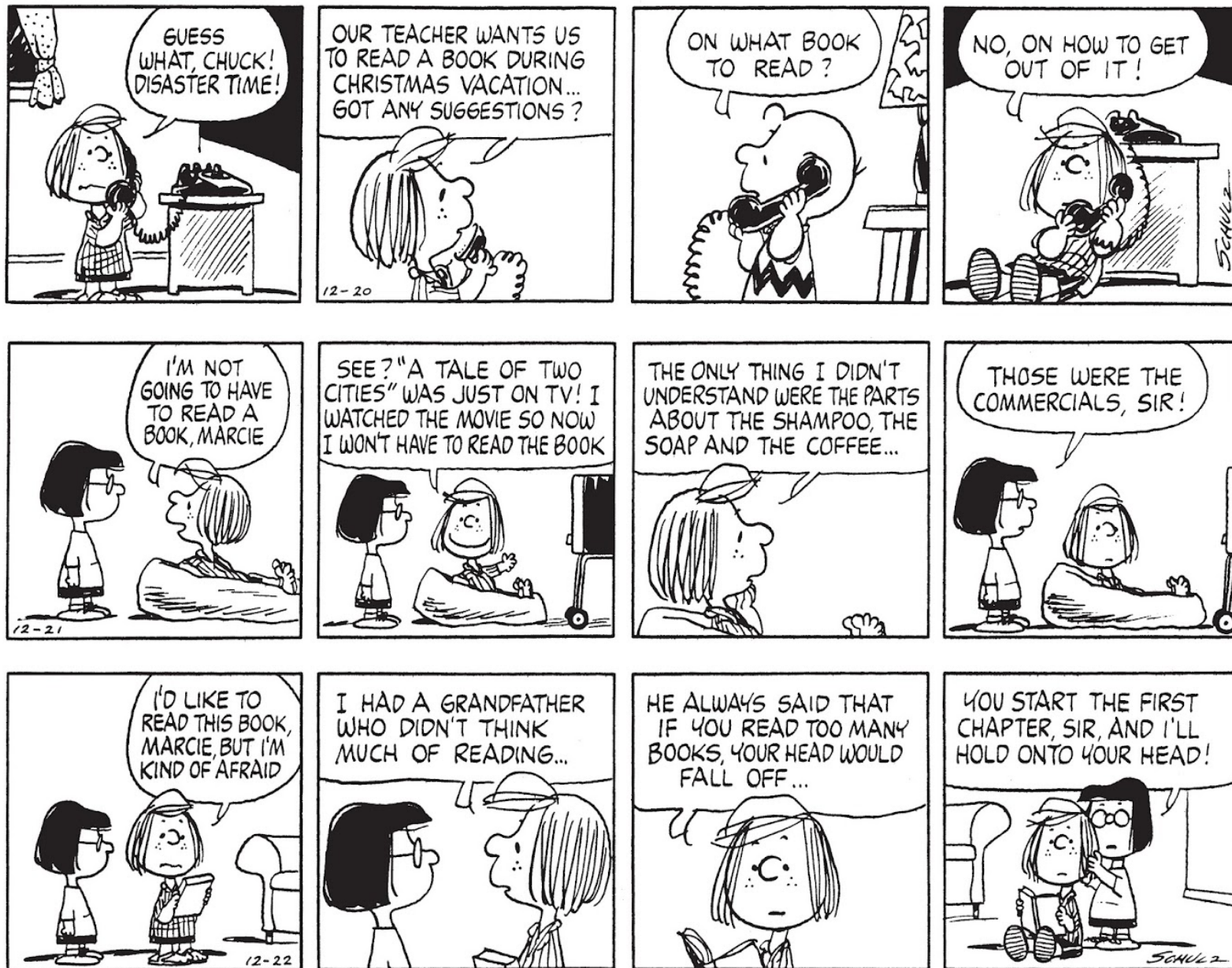


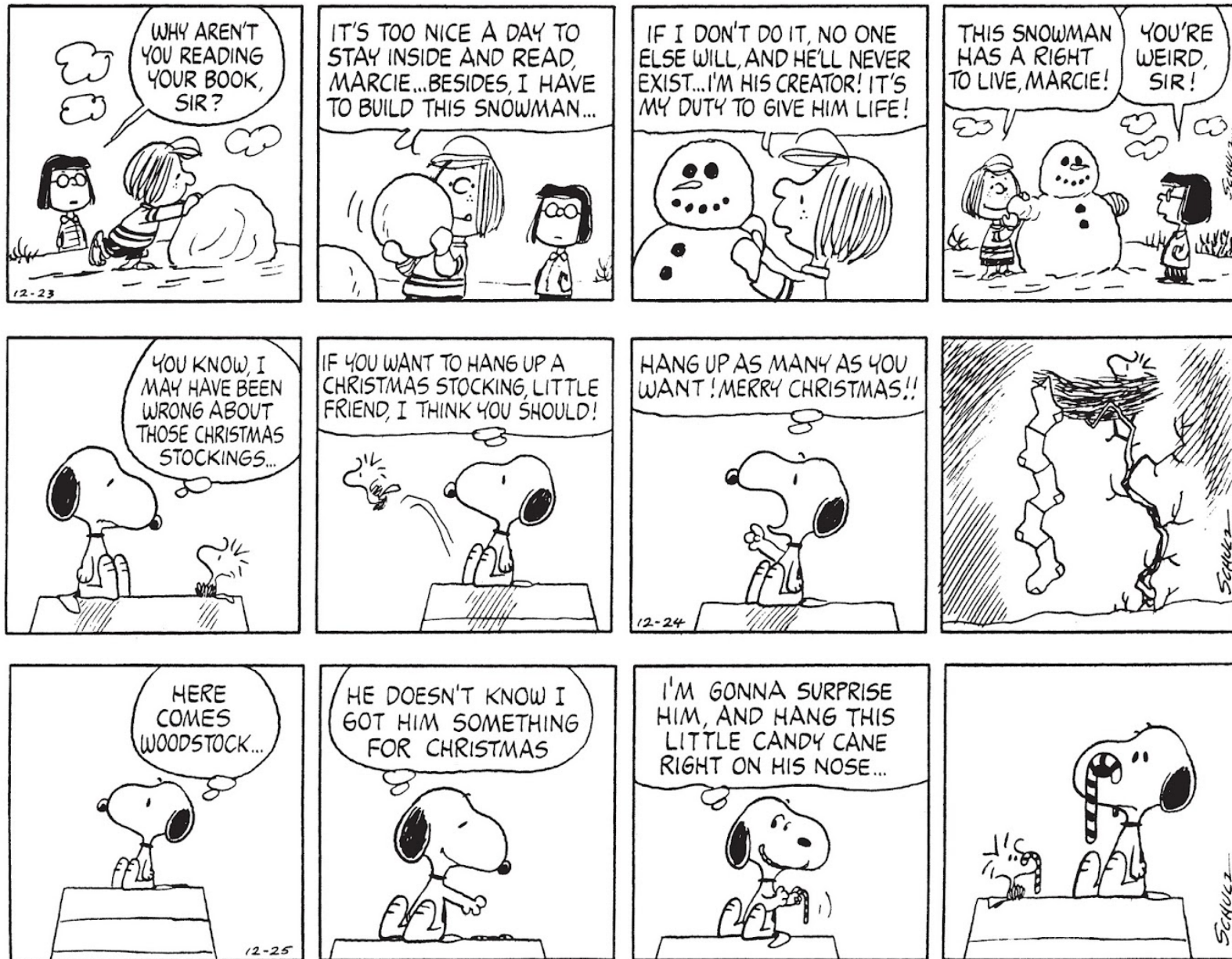
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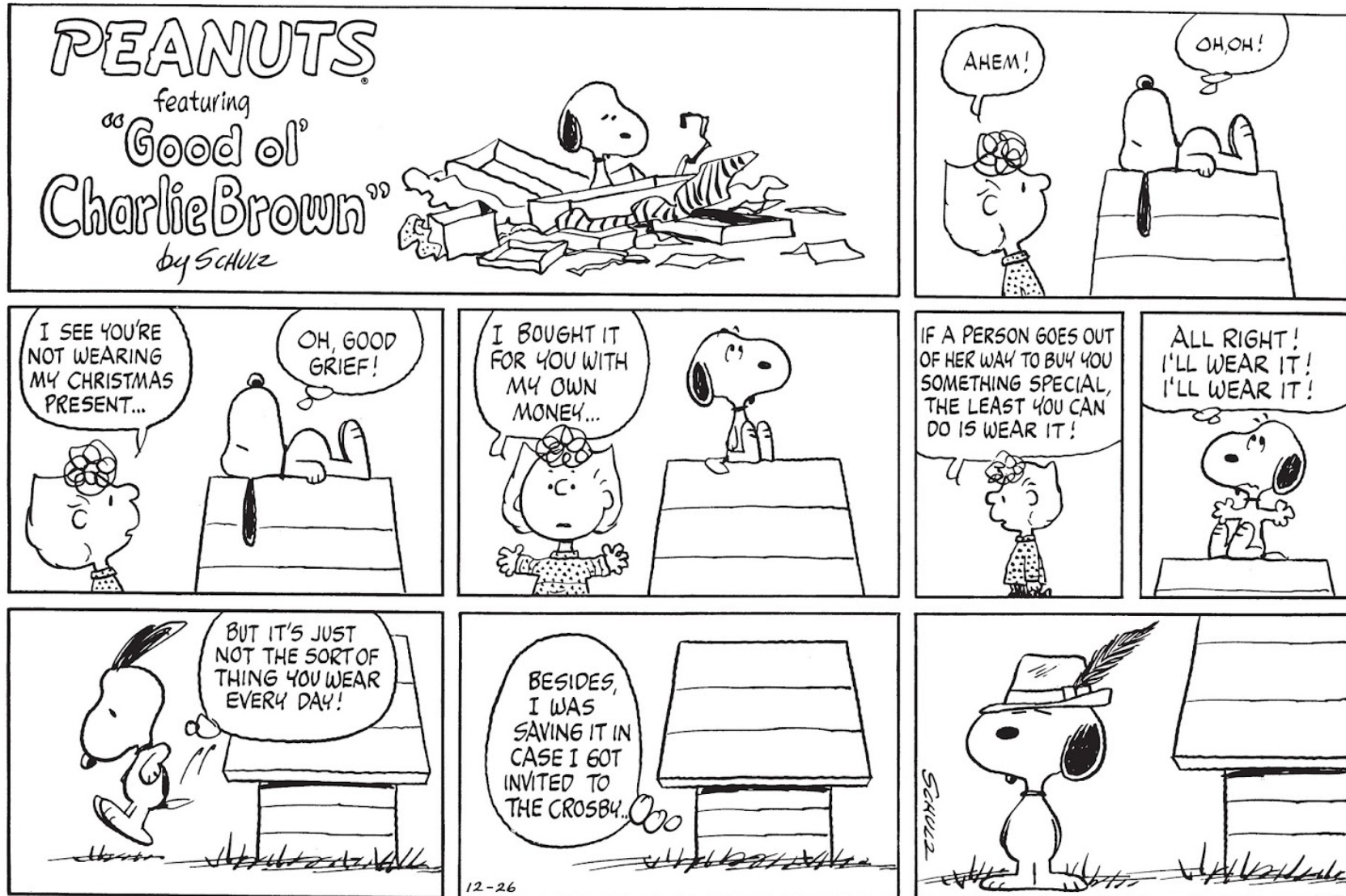
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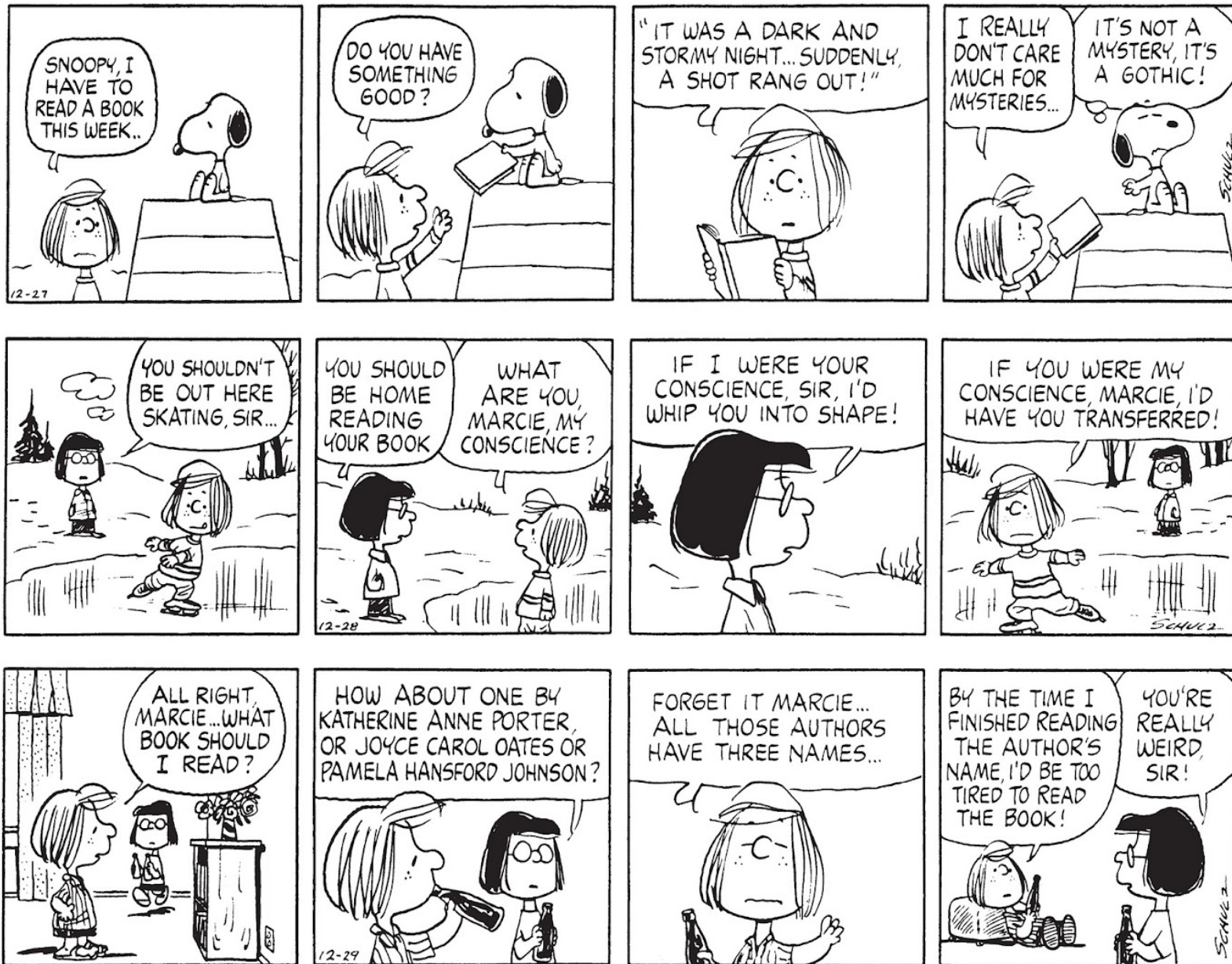


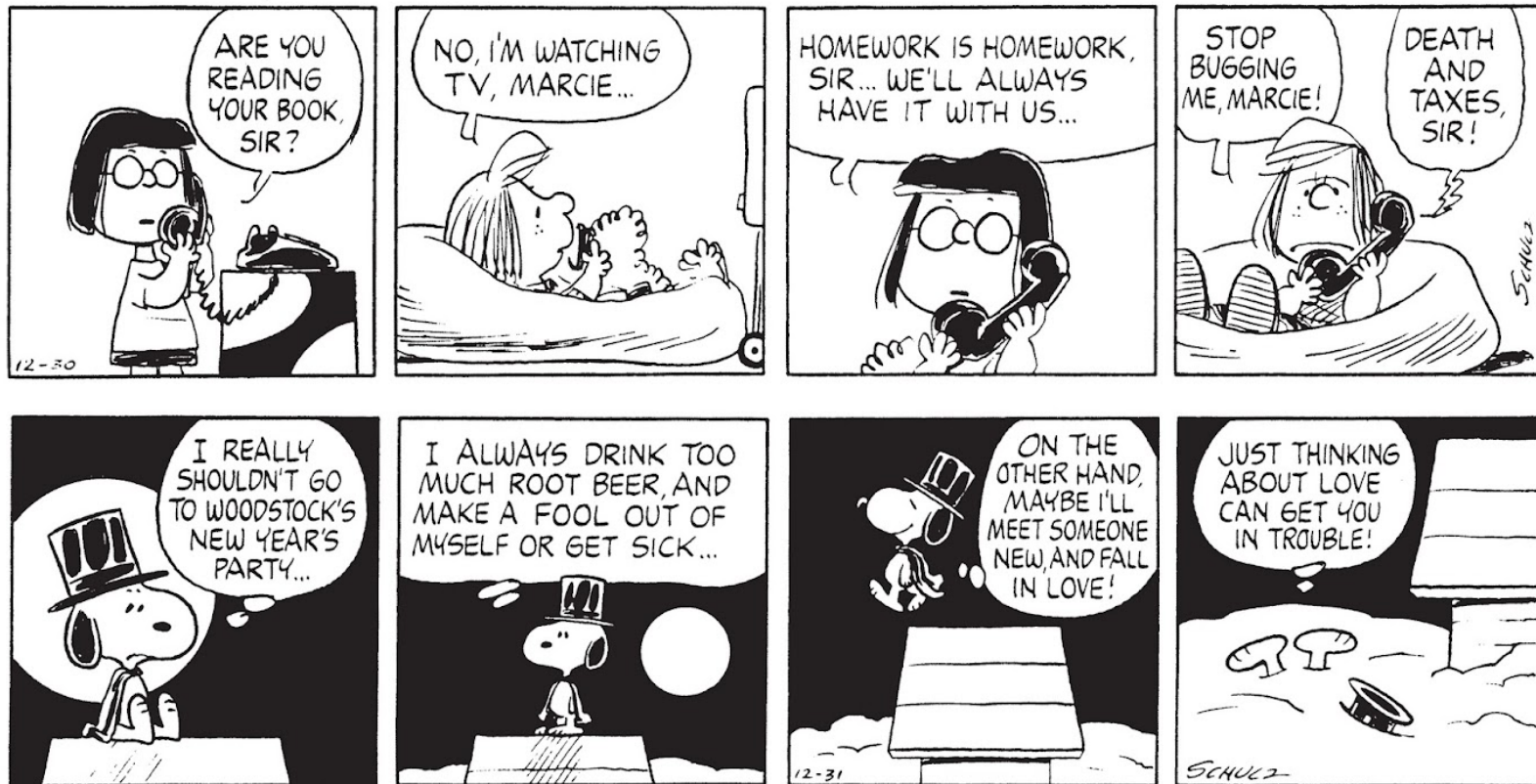
















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CHARLES M. SCHULZ • 1922 TO 2000

Charles M. Schulz was born November 26, 1922, in Minneapolis. His destiny was foreshadowed when an uncle gave him, at the age of two days, the nickname “Sparky” (after the racehorse Spark Plug in the newspaper strip *Barney Google*).

Schulz grew up in St. Paul. By all accounts, he led an unremarkable, albeit sheltered, childhood. He was an only child, close to both parents. His eventual career path was nurtured by his father, who bought four Sunday papers every week — just for the comics.

An outstanding student, he skipped two grades early on, but began to flounder in high school — perhaps not so coincidentally at the same time kids are going through their cruelest, most status-conscious

period of socialization. The pain, bitterness, insecurity, and failures chronicled in *Peanuts* appear to have originated from this period of Schulz’s life.

Although Schulz enjoyed sports, he also found refuge in solitary activities: reading, drawing, and watching movies. He bought comic books and Big Little Books, pored over the newspaper strips, and copied his favorites — *Buck Rogers*, the Walt Disney characters, *Popeye*, *Tim Tyler’s Luck*. He quickly became a connoisseur; his heroes were Milton Caniff, Roy Crane, Hal Foster, and Alex Raymond.

In his senior year in high school, his mother noticed an ad in a local newspaper for a correspondence school, Federal Schools (later called Art

Instruction Schools). Schulz passed the talent test, completed the course, and began trying, unsuccessfully, to sell gag cartoons to magazines. (His first published drawing was of his dog, Spike, and appeared in a 1937 *Ripley's Believe It or Not!* installment.)

After World War II had ended and Schulz was discharged from the army, he started submitting gag cartoons to the various magazines of the time; his first breakthrough, however, came when an editor at *Timeless Topix* hired him to letter adventure comics. Soon after that, he was hired by his alma mater, Art Instruction, to correct student lessons returned by mail.

Between 1948 and 1950, he succeeded in selling 17 cartoons to the *Saturday Evening Post* — as well as, to the local *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, a weekly comic feature called *Li'l Folks*. It ran in the women's section and paid \$10 a week. After writing and drawing the feature for two years, Schulz asked for a better location in the paper or for daily exposure, as well as a raise. When he was turned down on all three counts, he quit.

He started submitting strips to the newspaper syndicates. In the spring of 1950, he received a letter from the United Feature Syndicate, announcing its interest in his submission, *Li'l Folks*. Schulz boarded a train in June for New York City; more interested in doing a strip than a panel, he also brought along the first

installments of what would become *Peanuts* — and that was what sold. (The title, which Schulz loathed to his dying day, was imposed by the syndicate). The first *Peanuts* daily appeared October 2, 1950; the first Sunday, January 6, 1952.

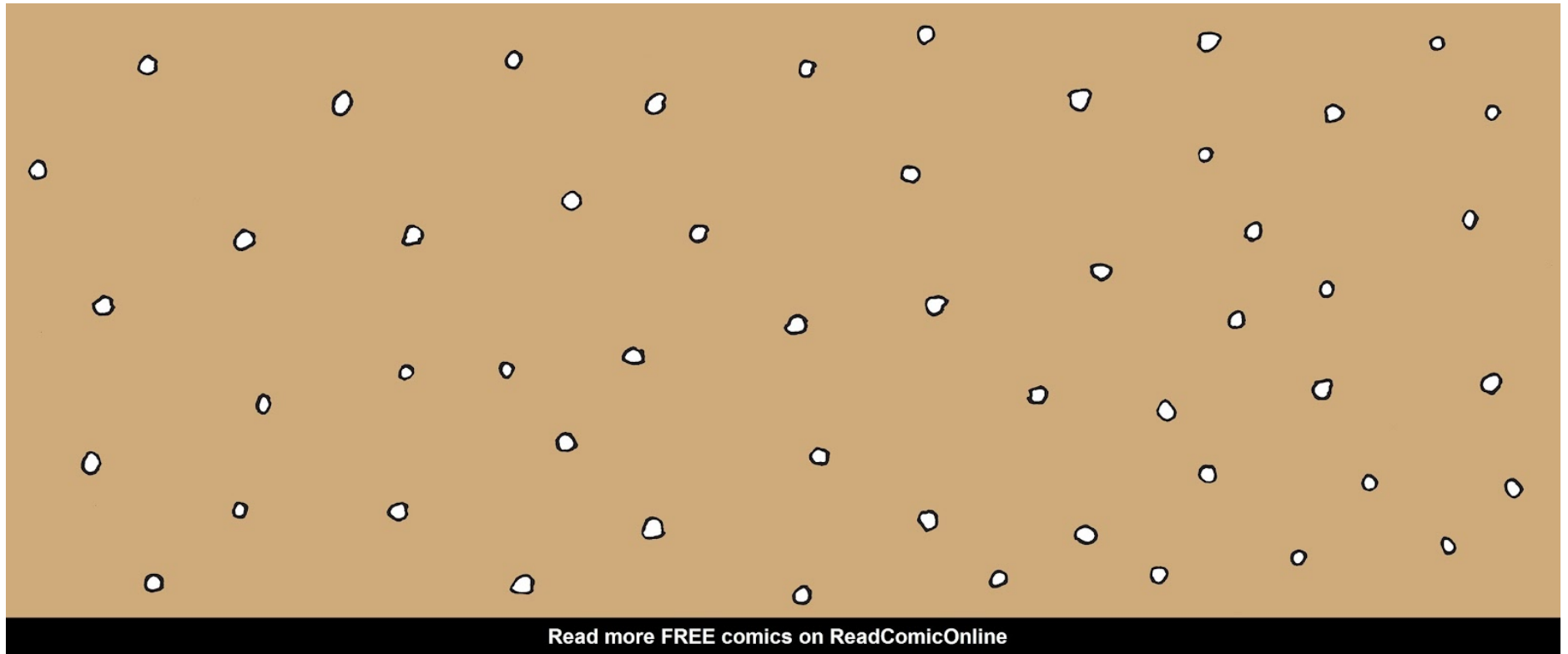
Prior to *Peanuts*, the province of the comics page had been that of gags, social and political observation, domestic comedy, soap opera, and various adventure genres. Although *Peanuts* changed, or evolved, during the 50 years Schulz wrote and drew it, it remained, as it began, an anomaly on the comics page — a comic strip about the interior crises of the cartoonist himself. After a painful divorce in 1973 from which he had not yet recovered, Schulz told a reporter, “Strangely, I’ve drawn better cartoons in the last six months — or as good as I’ve ever drawn. I don’t know how the human mind works.” Surely, it was this kind of humility in the face of profoundly irreducible human questions that makes *Peanuts* as universally moving as it is.

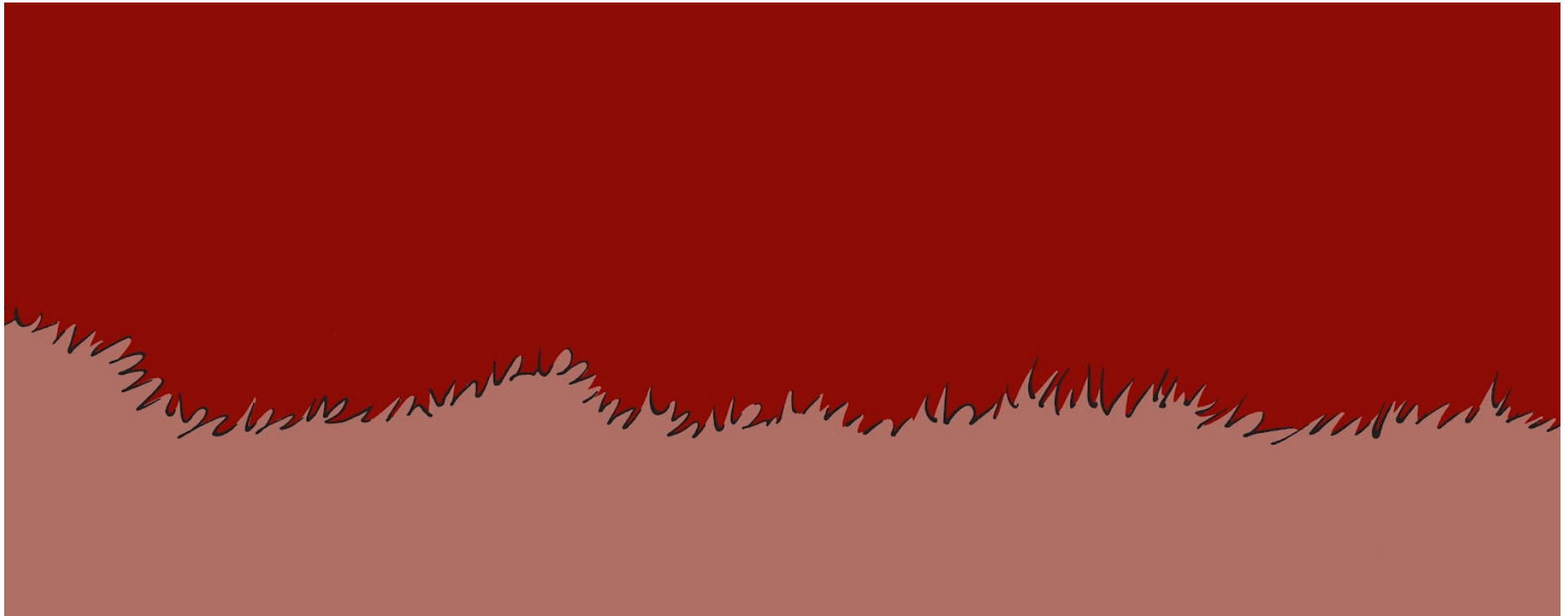
Diagnosed with cancer, Schulz retired from *Peanuts* at the end of 1999. He died on February 12, 2000, the day before his last strip was published (and two days before Valentine’s Day)

— having completed 17,897 daily and Sunday strips, each and every one fully written, drawn, and lettered entirely by his own hand — an unmatched achievement in comics.

—Gary Groth









COMING IN *THE COMPLETE PEANUTS*: 1977-1978

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